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WRONG SIDE OUT

CHAPTER I

MR. AND MRS. REDWAY

ALEXANDER BEAUCLERK REDWAY was a tall well-proportioned gentleman and one of the best-dressed men in the district of Bayswater, in whose Grove he used to walk with no unkind attention from the ladies and perusals from the gentlemen, in his hints of collars and ties and in the situation of his buttons at the back of his coat. He lived in a very tall house in the neighbourhood of Colville Square, and as he was an idle man, he seldom left the scenes and streets of Bayswater for the wider thoroughfares and more magnificent shops of the West End of London, which I think begins somewhere about the Marble Arch looking west. He belonged to one club which he did not often visit, using it chiefly for the purpose of giving a dinner to a friend when a single guest rendered the labours of the home kitchen troublesome and inconvenient.

Mr. and Mrs. Redway were childless. They had been married about six years, and were still childless. Redway had married upon one of those principles which characterized, not the winding, but the straight line of his habitual life. He had affirmed of himself that he never would marry before he was thirty-six; and at thirty-six he married. He was exact in his habits. He ate with a

punctuality that led to much disorder in the kitchen, and was the cause of frequent arrivals of men who in tones of impudence demanded the cook's boxes. Once a month, precisely at the moment of the shutters being drawn up, Mr. Alexander Beauclerk Redway was to be seen at the door of a branch of the Oxford and Cambridge Bank, when he instantly stepped forward to the counter and drew the exact sum that he knew he would want for the month. The clerks did not need to ask what time of day it was when they saw Mr. Redway flourish his cheque. He was minute and particular in all matters relating to his household. He never suffered his cook or any other servant to close the house of a night. He put out the fires by throwing water on them. With his own hand he turned off the gas. He saw that every basement door was barred and bolted, and kept his wife awake an hour if one of the cats was out, by telling her of fires which have been kindled by cats' tails catching hold of glowing cinders in the ash-pan and whipping the same in agony across the floor. But though many old maids might have laughed at him and his habits, in one feature of his character he rose unconsciously to the very height of the noblest of human virtues: he was never known to tell a lie, nor in any way to brag, nor mislead another whether in jest or from some ignoble motive. If the article he had bought was twenty guineas or the cigar he smoked was thirty pounds a thousand, he would stick to the exact sum, and you would have sworn, even if you had not seen him make the purchase, that he had spent that money and no more nor less.

Perhaps he had one weakness—a weakness that is common to many of us. He was proud, in a nice, delicate, off-hand way, of his lineage. His friends knew that he had the blood of the Charleses in him, and this belief he was willing to improve and advance by his face and general

demeanour when the subject was hinted at, say, by his wife. It seems that his father had been a stockbroker, and was a cousin, once or twice removed, of Aurelius Beauclerk of York House, Wiltshire. Hence he claimed descent from Charles I. through Charles II. and Nel Gwynne, and his Tree proved that he told no lies, and that Mr. Redway, his son, was justified in claiming royal blood in his veins. This Mr. Redway the stockbroker died and left his only son the whole of his property, which enabled Alexander his child to support life in Bayswater on about fourteen hundred a year. He was thought to favour the portraits of Charles I. rather than those of Charles II., particularly the engraving that appears in Sir Henry Wotton's collection, and that is why, perhaps, he wore his mustache and beard much as Charles was represented by the artist to wear his; but he was careful to keep his hair short, consistently with the customs of his age.

I have said that he was childless. One can rarely get at the secret views of a man on this subject. Redway claimed the state of having no child as a distinction, like the inability of playing the piano in this age when the laundress and the like of the laundress can perform upon it—in this age when the perpetual curate on a hundred and twenty a year, hath his ten to grace his hardfared table, or even his twelve for whom relations may sometimes find humble occupations. Perhaps, had he had a child or two, he might have held his regally shaped head a little higher: as he had none, he talked about children ill-naturedly. He said they were poor relations who were always in want, beggars at their parents' board, cunning in the art of cadging by employment of the mother's weakness. He would say that a man might have three sons and three daughters. All went well till the trousers and the jacket were donned. Then came heavy bills for schooling, great expectations seldom fulfilled in the direction of the universities or the

professions. A great deal of smoking, a dangerous taste for strong liquors, a weakness for the society of barmaids and shop-girls in preference to that of young ladies. The young man in the church perhaps did well: he was forced to. The others dropped the vocations which had been obtained by the aid of crammers, and wrote home, starving, from foreign parts. The daughters found life weary without husbands, or plenty of young men to carry on the flirtations which in married life are commonly broken off after a week or two. Young men were not to be caught and hooked by projecting fishing-rods through drawing-room windows and singing and playing the piano at the other side of the room. Young men were confoundedly matter-of-fact: would sooner talk of father's finances than hear about songs of Araby. They learnt business in the City in commercial houses, and most of those in the professions knew themselves poor, and their multiplication table was as a weir in a river which flows placidly till it comes to the obstacle, when it breaks into commotion and foam, in other words into scent-bottles, tears, and that condition of life which is called being jilted. After which the heartless stream takes up its calm burthen beyond the weir, and flows forward until it encounters another obstruction.

Mrs. Redway suited him as fully as in this world of contradictions and inconsistencies a woman can fit a man. Very little light was to be seen between the dovetails of their characters. She had been married at the age of thirty, perhaps through no fault of hers, but through the obstinate perversity of her mother, who strongly objected to one of the suitors, namely the Chevalier Albert Garcia. The other passes by as a phantom. She was entirely under her mother's control, who had it in her power to will away some Indian estate worth about four hundred a year. But though Redway was quite conscious of the Chevalier's

ardent and unaffected admiration for the lady, he continued to keep him as a friend. He was one of the most frequent of visitors. No matter the quality of the luncheon or the dinner, a knife and fork would be ready for Garcia. Indeed the Redways, who were limited to two, were extremely musical. Redway played the violin with taste and skill, and Mrs. Redway was as nimble and perhaps as tasteful as any professional on the piano. Mrs. Redway before her marriage had learnt singing as well as playing from the Chevalier Garcia at his rooms near Welbeck Street, where, 'twas said, he was making piles of money by his art and teaching all sorts of throats and unmelodious fingers to distract their friends, at fees which began at a guinea. Through his wife Redway had become acquainted with the Chevalier, and fell into transports of delight when he heard him play and sing. They sang in Italian, English, and French; they also gave their friends a taste of German; and the breadth of the Chevalier's mind was so extensive in respect of music that he could include Russian, Turkish, and songs of Scandinavia.

As Redway did not want money, no excuse for his marriage could be found in his poverty, nor in that pleasant outlook of four hundred a year. His wife was certainly not a woman to fall in love with, and this was one reason perhaps why he married her. He was allured by her character, her arguments, and her tastes. She was of a cold and calculating school of female philosophers; had studied John Stuart Mill; was well grounded in the views of Jeremy Bentham and even Adam Smith; read only the very best novels, which in Redway's opinion were also the very best; and as far as it was possible for convention to admit, she did and said everything which she thought was common sense. She was not a person to continue long in reasoning in a strain of sentiment, which she soon complained of as humbug. She was thin, with rather high

cheek-bones, large slate-blue eyes, which she could play with the art of her sex. Everything suggested an appearance of tightness about her head. The flesh of her brow and cheeks was stretched tight, and tight even to shininess was the flesh of her nose. Her earrings sat tight in their lobes, as though the grip rose to pain. On the whole, she was slightly negligent in dress, and her bedroom was a scene of disorder, though not noticeable to the male eye. She wore her hair brushed tightly back from her forehead, and as there was not much of it, the brown inches were screwed on top of her head in a manner to suggest the mode of the Chinese.

They kept a little victoria, in which Mrs. Redway drove almost always alone with an ancient toy terrier, which yapped at people through scarcely more than gums; it was decorated with a blue ribbon and a bell, and was much disliked by Mr. Redway, who never once, however, objected to the little beast sitting at table or partaking of the flesh of a mutton chop in a saucer in his wife's bedroom. Certainly Mrs. Redway had few friends. She neither cultivated nor cared for acquaintances. Of the few invitations she received, the musical party was sure to attract her. Her husband seldom drove in her victoria. She and the dog were nearly always alone, and Mr. Redway would salute them from the pavement of the Bayswater Road or from Westbourne Grove.

He was a fairly robust man, and the hair upon his face was not of the colour of King Charles I., but he knew if he lived to be as old as that monarch his mustache and beard would bear in hue the same resemblance as his face presented, and he made no trouble of the question of his beard when he reflected with ancestral pleasure that the blood of a king circulated through his veins, albeit before it came to him it had to course through the blue ducts of the gay Fair of the orange. He was one

of those few men to whom long life seems promised. Though he had nothing to do, he enjoyed his pleasures such as they were—the visits to the theatre, the rubber at his club, the game of billiards at some well-known rooms near Jermyn Street, the unpremeditated concerts when Garcia called and stayed to lunch or dinner, an occasional trip in a friend's yacht, perhaps a jaunt abroad in the winter lasting a month, sometimes with his wife and sometimes without. He was therefore a man not to die of ennui. His pleasures were few and simple, and they diverted the day from the breakfast-table to putting a candle to the gas-jet to light himself to bed.

One day, when the world was younger than it is, when thirty or forty years ago would safely run the globe back into the posture of affairs and fashions, habits, science, art, and amusements in general, which the genius and frivolity of man had then arrived at, Mr. Redway found himself disturbed morning and night by a slight cough. He was a hearty man with a good appetite, and was at a loss to understand why the box of lozenges which he had sucked according to the directions of the manufacturer had not put an end to the trouble which kept him awake, and made his wife by his side peevish.

One night, when they were lying in the gloom of the night-light, which Mrs. Redway regularly burnt with some faint regard to the legs of a burglar under the bedstead—for, as we have seen, Mr. Redway was occasionally absent—one night, I say, Mrs. Redway said to her husband—

"Your cough, Alexander, continues very troublesome. If I were you, I should see Dr. Terry."

In the morning Mrs. Redway sent for Dr. Terry, who was a rather fashionable doctor driving a middling trade on the Pembridge Square side of the Grove, wherein may be counted a number of fine houses. He was an apple-faced

man who contrived an academic look by means of a white cravat, and some thought well of him, and some affirmed that they would not call him in to cut a toe-nail. He arrived at eleven o'clock, and found Mr. Redway seated in a rich dressing-gown in his study upstairs, smoking a cigarette.

"Well, and what's the matter?" said Dr. Terry, who was followed by Mrs. Redway.

"He is troubled with a cough, Dr. Terry," said the lady, who was always polite to doctors and parsons. "There, do you hear it?"

"It might be some tobacco just swallowed," said Terry, with a smile which suggested that his idea might be taken either seriously or as a stroke of humour.

"Lord, no!" answered the gentleman, looking rather more like Charles I. than usual. "Good God, Terry, how many cigarettes and cigars do you think I've smoked without this cough?"

"It is my duty to inform you," said Dr. Terry, after a short examination, "that I detect a faint murmur in the apex of the right lung, but that may not proceed from anything to excite alarm. My advice is," continued he, looking at his watch and addressing Mrs. Redway, "that your husband should lose no time in consulting the highest authority in town by leaving him a specimen of his sputum to analyze. There can be no mistake in the exhibition of tuberculosis."

"Is it curable?" inquired Mrs. Redway.

"Oh yes, taken in the act," answered the doctor. "But delay means death."

"Who's the best man?" cried Mr. Redway, with great irritability.

"Dr. Goodman." He gave an address in Cavendish Square. "I will drop him a line, and you will call upon him at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning."

Mrs. Redway did not accompany her husband. She had an appointment to meet some ladies to establish a lost dogs' home in the neighbourhood of Ealing, that many valuable and magnificent animals might be rescued from the hands of the police. Mr. Redway took a four-wheeler to guard him against the draughts and by-blows of the morning, and reached Dr. Goodman's house as the hour of eleven was striking. But though eleven o'clock might be indicated as an appointment, it was not necessary to keep it, as Mr. Redway discovered; for he had to wait an hour and a half before he was called into the presence of the great man. Had he been a student of human nature, that hour and a half would not have been lost. He witnessed many types of humanity under various forms of suffering. A lady stooping to bring a hassock to her, fell under the table, and was promptly seated on her chair again by Mr. Redway. A stout admiral entered: his face was the colour of port wine. His hair was white and his finger-length of whisker was curled. He was evidently that sort of Naval man whose record of active duties is comprised in hunting for slavers, in burning bamboo villages, in sending boats up a miasmatic river to bring down a fetid black monarch. Maybe he had looked on from a man-o'-war at the soldiers doing the work ashore, and now he had the gout, and his face suggested the reasons of his seizure and possession. He called it the most damnably tormenting disease that ever aimed at and made a caricature of the human body. His oaths were large and polished by use, and he discharged them without the least regard to the presence of a young curate who lay in a fainting state upon a sofa, sometimes fanned by his young wife and sometimes encouraged by a sniff from a smelling-bottle. The admiral roared that at one time the gout swelled the hands: at another time it turned the eyes into drops of blood, and so distorted and thickened

the human face that even leeches refused the unpalatable dish, or if they sucked, seemed by their efforts to enlarge the suet-puddings of the gouty complexions.

Redway, who was not suffering from the gout, listened with an unmoved face to the admiral's observations, which were intended for the comfort and repose of spirit of all gouty people in the room, of whom there might be eight, for Dr. Goodman had a great reputation for his treatment of gout, though at that time his wife was lying dangerously ill of rheumatic gout in her bedroom over the gouty admiral's head. At last, after the admiral had disappeared with several others who had echoed his sentiments, some of them believing him to be a lord and to that social degree privileged, Mr. Redway was called out by the man in black who had opened the door to him, and was shown into a little room at the back of the waiting-room in which was a large table, blinds which jaundiced the complexion, three or four leather-seated chairs, busts of great medical authorities, and a considerable length of glazed bookshelves, loaded with English, French, German, Italian, and other works in foreign tongues. A round little man sat writing at the table, and close to him was a leather-seated chair. The plump and comfortable-looking little man suffered from a faint suffusion of ginger hair at the sides of his head, the middle being peculiarly bald.

He stood up, and looking at the card which Mr. Redway extended, he said, "Ah, yes. Let me see; where is Terry's letter?"

He fumbled among some papers, found the letter, and read it in silence through a pair of gold eye-glasses which he held to his nose. Then the same operation that had startled Mrs. Redway and irritated her husband, was gone through. Mr. Redway was asked to strip to his shirt, and being rather tall for the operations designed by Dr. Goodman, was requested to place himself flat upon the

sofa, and the stethoscope was applied. After much careful listening, the doctor stood erect and exclaimed, "The right lung is undoubtedly gone."

"Gone!" cried Mr. Redway, springing erect like a figure in Punch and Judy.

"In the sense that it is touched," was the answer. "The murmur mentioned by Dr. Terry is audible."

"But what is the cause of the murmur?" said poor Mr. Redway, dressing himself.

"I should be better able to diagnose your disease if you will let me have some of your sputum for microscopic analysis, and I will ask you to call again next Tuesday."

"I will be here on Tuesday," said Mr. Redway, who doubted, as he had a murmuring lung, whether he could possibly live to that day. And he took his departure, leaving behind him memorials of his years, habits, mother and father, travels, and other matters.

On his arrival at his house he was not happy to find the Chevalier Garcia seated in company with his wife at luncheon, which had obviously been postponed until the lady had transacted her business about the dogs' home. When Redway entered the dining-room, his wife started out of her chair with a mingled shriek of anxiety, expectation and pleasure at seeing him. But the Chevalier must first be shaken hands with.

He was a rather tall, and perhaps what would be called a burly man, of a very pale olive complexion, shaggy, heavy and congenitally knitted eyebrows, under which his black eyes shone with unusual brilliance of light and uncommon alertness of observation. Under his nose, which was thick, straight, but by no means unhandsome, was curled a huge mustache, which disguised a portion of the underlip with a short imperial, like that with which Louis Napoleon went clad. He looked a complete

foreigner, a little of the Jewish Spaniard, but what was Jewish in him had been largely neutralized by the circumstance of his mother having been a Roman Catholic who lived in Boston, Massachusetts, where old Garcia fell in love and where young Garcia was born and baptized in his mother's faith, old Garcia having been an infidel who used to say, "We shall know the truth when we have discovered it; and meanwhile I do not believe in saints in heaven, but in saints on earth, where they find plenty of honest work to do."

Albert in his youth had discovered a strong musical taste, and his father spent much money in training him both in America and in this country, so that before he died he had a son whose reputation both as an opera and concert singer, and as a charming performer on the piano, fiddle, and other instruments, was not disputed even by the critical friends of the Press, who were in the habit of receiving gifts from that well-known bass, Signor Lardi Dardi. The Chevalier occupied some large and finely decorated rooms in Welbeck Street, which he had handsomely furnished, and there he gave lessons in music and singing to all sorts of people, chiefly ladies who visited him for social or professional motives. He taught them all, whether they had music in them or not. Which was contrary to the practice of a neighbouring artiste, an Italian, who, though he charged but half Garcia's fees, was honest enough to tell would-be pupils that they had no voices and no natural art of the least discernible sort, and that it would be cheating and disappointing them if he took them in hand; a piece of incredible candour, seeing that it drove most of the people whom he declined to instruct into the handsomely furnished rooms of the Chevalier Garcia.

Amongst Garcia's pupils had been Mrs. Redway before her marriage, and so fascinated was she by the man's

considerable talents, that she introduced Redway to him, and as the fees were comparatively small in those days, Redway accepted the offer of an hour a day at the violin, which he played neatly, never missing the true sentiment of the theme, so that he became a good accompanist to his wife, and as Garcia often looked in unpremeditatedly, we will call it a little before the dinner-hour, a pretty concert would follow, to which some few and highly favoured friends were admitted. But the opportunities which supplied these melodious hours were few, for Garcia was a very busy man.

CHAPTER II

THE MICROBE

"WHAT," said Redway to his wife, without taking the least notice of the Chevalier, "do you think the doctor says?"

"What?" asked Mrs. Redway.

"That I have microbes in one lung, and that I am to send him some of my spittle at once, that he may discern the character of the microbes, and determine whether they be phthisical or not."

He left the room, to freshen himself for the luncheon-table. He was by no means hungry, but he was anxious to hear from the Chevalier all that he could tell him about the microbe, of which he seemed to know almost as much as music. When he returned, he noticed that Garcia had been apparently consoling Mrs. Redway with hopes more or less cheerful.

"Has it ever been in your family?" asked the Chevalier.

"Never," shouted Redway.

"Did not your Aunt Amelia die of consumption?" inquired Mrs. Redway.

"Curse Aunt Amelia!" bawled Redway. "Besides, she was my mother's half-sister, and you can find nothing hereditary in half-sisterhoods or half-anythings."

"There has been no other case than Aunt Amelia?" said the Chevalier.

"None, and be blowed to all family connections. Family ties are themselves bacilli, who eat into the patient's purse, and the deeper that lung by which we breathe and move, the wider spreads the family microbe."

"What is the cure?"

"There is no cure," exclaimed Mr. Redway; and he put his knife and fork together.

"Nonsense," cried Mrs. Redway. "Thousands are walking about in health who once had or were threatened with consumption."

The sputum was sent, and on the appointed day Mr. Redway called upon Dr. Goodman. This time he was not kept waiting above an hour, but it was an hour which, like the night in "The Prisoner of Chillon," might have turned Redway's hair white in the long-hand's passage over the dial. He was called in, and beside the doctor, on the right of the table, was a chair warm with the form of some doomed person just gone out. Dr. Goodman remembered the name, and referred in his note-book to the phases of the case he had commented on. He said a little abruptly—

"I regret to say that I can trace the bacillus in your sputum."

"What am I to do?" said Mr. Redway.

"I have been thinking over your case," answered Dr. Goodman, with some benignity and in an earnest voice. "My recommendation to you is, get your weight as accurately as possible, then make a voyage to Cape Town and home. If you find the voyage beneficial—and that may be easily tested—and if the murmur is no longer audible, I might be induced to advise you to try a second voyage, which should extend to Australia; and your choice must fall upon a sailing-ship, as you cannot breathe too much fresh air; and the fresh air of the ocean is incomparable in healing virtues, from the medical point

of view. I warn you that there is such a thing as galloping consumption, but you show no evidence of that form of the disease. I hope you have no business, nor any other considerations to render such a voyage difficult."

"None," answered Mr. Redway.

"You can sail at once?"

"By the next ship."

"The sooner the better," said Dr. Goodman. "You must get rid of the gas-heated air, and the dust of the road, and the close atmosphere of your house. If you sleep on deck all night, the speedier, in my opinion, will be the cure. That being dangerous, however, to a man whose constitution is accustomed to blankets, and not to planks and dew, to motionless atmospheres and not to stormy breezes, you will be doing right by occupying your cabin by night with your window open, and breathing the air of the deck all day."

"The sooner I go the better, I suppose," said Mr. Redway.

"You should be out of England this day week," answered Dr. Goodman.

"I gather that your cure, or rather treatment, consists wholly of fresh air."

"Fresh air to a large extent," answered the doctor, "and deep and abundant respiration. But you must also eat heartily, though with judgment. Plenty of exercise will not hurt you; but why I enjoin you to leave England is that you may quit the troubles and worries of home life and of existence in general in this country. I want you to carry away to sea with you a mind as blank as a sheet of paper, so that all things impressed upon it will be as wonderful as the sights which greet the eyes of the little child, and as stimulative as those discoveries in science which reward the labour of the studious man. I want you to think of nothing but what you see; and what you

see will keep your mind away from all thoughts calculated to make you uneasy."

Mr. Redway put down a guinea and parted with Dr. Goodman with the resolution to seek no further advice, but to give himself the full benefit of the physician's opinion and instructions, and if things did not mend with him, then to try other sources. Yet I am bound to say that he left the doctor's house as overwhelmed as though he had beheld the devil flying past him overhead. He—the athletic, the active, the healthy Alexander Beauclerk Redway, who relished his meat and drink with a perpetual persuasive and pleasurable sensation of hunger, who enjoyed yachting, shooting, hunting, all manly diversions proper to his age—struck by that fell, subtle, and deadly malady called phthisis, which colours the cheek as a hag embellishes her face, which brightens the eye into beauty like that of the rose in her drooping death, which thins the fingers, sickens the appetite, makes lean the lovely frame, and sad beyond sorrow the wan smile of dying mortality! He reached his home. His wife sat awaiting him. She was alone.

"What does the doctor say?" she asked.

"He has discovered the phthisical microbe in my right lung."

"High up?" she exclaimed, having schooled herself for any news, and speaking without the note of a tear or even of emotion in her voice.

"Why do you ask that question?"

"Because the Chevalier has just left this note, but he had not time to come in and hear the result." And taking a letter from a table, she read—

"Dear Mrs. Redway,

"I have been enjoying a long talk with an Italian friend, who was cured of consumption in the lungs by

what is called the open-air treatment. Of course it is a very old treatment. Long and long ago it was customary for doctors to send their patients to Madeira or on a long voyage. But unfortunately this prescription was given when the disease had such a hold that it may have passed all cure, even to the extent of one whole lung being destroyed and the other threatened; hence the open-air treatment was suspected, fell into disuse, and, being very inconvenient, was indicated mainly by those medical men who, having exhausted the conventional remedies, sent their unhappy patients abroad to die. But my friend assures me that the open-air treatment is the only treatment if promptly and properly applied. If your husband's lung were half gone, my friend would have nothing to say. But the report is that tuberculosis is present high in the apex of the right lung, and the process to extirpate this fungus is to breathe with the utmost deepness, so that air shall fill the lung to its highest point, for it is true that when we breathe naturally we scarcely fill more than half our lungs, which leaves the apex, or highest part, untouched, and as the bacillus cannot exist in fresh cold air, deep breathing, steady, resolute and continuous, can alone avail, aided by rich foods, particularly cream, eggs, game, beef and mutton, and in short a diet which the patient's digestive functions can assimilate. If this course is strictly conformed to, then my friend has not the least doubt of your husband's perfect recovery in a few months.

"Yours sincerely,

"ALBERT GARCIA."

"I suppose," said Redway, "that the best place to go to for persons afflicted like me is the Cape of Good Hope."

"Will that journey give you time enough?" inquired Mrs. Redway, speaking in a note that did not seem to express either great fear or deep affection.

"Certainly time enough to ascertain whether plenty of fresh air and the outdoor life of the ocean, coupled with the selected fare of the ship's saloon, is capable of restraining the malady by decrease of cough and increase of fat."

"How long does it take to get to the Cape and back?" asked his wife.

"I should think about seventy or eighty days."

"Will you take me with you?"

"Not unless you are seriously desirous of going," he answered. "It will be double cost, no amusement for you, a good deal of sea-sickness, a bedroom a little bigger than a coffin, and all for what? Merely to ask if I feel better every day, and disheartend by the troubles you have been put through, for life at sea is never comfortable."

She toyed with the terrier and answered, "I feel that it is my duty to be with you. But I also know that I can be of no use. If I am much troubled with sickness, which is quite likely, how can I be a comfort to you? The least likely stewardess or waiter on board is better than a wife prostrate in her bunk. It will be a long absence though," she continued. "A long absence, Alexander."

She threw the dog from her lap and rose to kiss her husband, sad with anxiety, and expectation at the root of it.

"What are the Lines to the Cape?" he inquired, thinking aloud, for you might as well have asked her what the term "triple-expansion" meant.

"I have not the slightest idea."

He pulled the bell, and a servant arrived who fetched the *Times*, and Mr. Redway, looking down the shipping columns, lighted upon the advertisements of the Union Steamship Company. He read aloud the description of a steamer called the *Princess Royal*. She was a thousand

tons; she sailed in eight days with the mails. Her commander was Captain Carlton. She was the fastest boat in the list, and was strongly recommended by the Company, as carrying a cow, a doctor, a piano, and other garnishings.

That evening some friends looked in. News even in Bayswater travels as it does in the provincial town. They had come with harp and fiddle, and consisted of a tall man who was a lawyer, and his wife and two daughters. Already they had heard that Mr. Redway had been attacked by phthisis, and under cover of music had come in, in a friendly way, to receive all the gossip which they could collect in Mrs. Redway's drawing-room. But they were not welcome. Mr. Redway sat in thought, without conversation or the desire for it, and Mrs. Redway was dull and anxiously fretful with the fear that her husband might be leaving her, a dying man, and that his return after his long absence might add to her grief and anxiety. So no music was suggested that night. But the visit proved not unwelcome because it turned out that Mr. Craven, the lawyer, had lost a brother through consumption, and had therefore a great deal to tell about it. The gentleman, of course when it was far too late, had taken shipping to Madeira, and it was not long after his arrival when his grave-stone decorated the cemetery. He had travelled by the Union Line, and Mr. Craven gave Mr. Redway the instructions he stood in need of. He advised him to lose no time, but to call next day at the offices of the Union Company, inspect the sketch of the ship, select his cabin, and so make sure of Dr. Goodman's prescription being carried out. The *Princess Royal* sailed from Southampton about the beginning of October.

"This," said Mr. Craven, "will carry you into southern summer, and whilst we are leaning against hurricanes dark with snowstorms, and hearing the water hissing through

the burst pipes, you will be admiring the giant mass of the Table Mountain grand with the light of the full moon in the north, and watching the lifting and sinking of the lovely veil of vapour which gathers as by magic up there, whilst the night wind is filled with the perfumes of the land, and the moon lily curtseys its homage in the perfect grace of flowers."

It is seldom that solicitors are so eloquent, but Mr. Craven had a corner in the parchment of his soul for poetry or poetic thought, and in his after-dinner speeches it was noticed that he rose far above the level of the average legal mind.

Next day Mr. Redway, at about eleven o'clock, went into the City on top of an omnibus. Although the Union ships sailed regularly from Southampton, the Company had a London Office, where you could secure berths and make other arrangements. It was a fine morning, and a slight fog hung over the suburbs of the City, through which the window-curtain gleamed with a yellower tinge than its manufacturer had wrought into it. The knocker which shone in the sun like gold was as dull as a piece of ship's sheathing. The hues of the horticulturist's hot-houses mocked with the early splendour of summer the film of the autumn which deepened with every night that swept the darkening earth into the cold, hoary cuttings of winter.

Soon after Mr. Redway had left his house—dressed in a light overcoat, and looking as much like Charles I. as a man worthy of a corner in Tussaud's exhibition could look—armed with an umbrella, on top of an omnibus, Mrs. Redway's victoria drove up to the hall door, and Mrs. Redway and her dog entered the carriage. We will deal with the voyage of the victoria first. The carriage was not intended for the Park nor for show purposes. It was to be steered by a wife's heart, whose thoughts were

constantly with her husband. She had once been nearly drowned, when staying at Colwyn Bay, by wading too far into the sea, and the shock dissuaded her from adventuring anything resembling a bath, unless the water was contained in a bath-room. This incident happened at the time of her engagement to Mr. Redway, whose sensations were equal to hers, insomuch that he too ceased to bathe in the sea, on the grounds that you easily got out of your depth, that the boat which is supposed to help people out of water was invariably moored about two miles from the scene where you were struggling, and that even if you could swim and the shore was close at hand, there was the fearful possibility of the cramp dragging you under.

When Mrs. Redway's carriage was in Cheapside, she ordered the coachman to stop at a shop stocked with nautical garments, furniture appertaining to the sea-bath, bathing-gowns and caps, and the like. She went in, and going up to the man behind the counter, who in obsequious posture awaited her approach, she pulled forth a tape measure marked off with a pin, and said, "Have you a life-buoy whose inner circumference would be about this measurement?"

This was exactly the girth of Redway's shoulders over the arms. The shopman groped about the shelves and brought down several neat life-buoys.

"How is it put on?" asked Mrs. Redway, picking up one which answered to her tape dimensions.

"Suppose this the water," said the man, laying the buoy flat upon the counter; "you lay hold of it with both hands and slip it over your head and arms, and then it floats up close under your armpits; its buoyancy keeps it there, and you sit upon the water like a duck."

"Would it come off if a man jumped with it from a ship?" asked the lady.

"Certainly not," was the reply, "if he jumped from

the height of St. Paul's, whether he held it up to him or not. They would come down together. The buoy and man would sink a space, but the man would not remain long enough under to be drowned."

"I'll take this buoy," said Mrs. Redway. "I presume that you guarantee it as entirely perfect, and that a man inside of it is safe, providing help is not unreasonably tardy?"

"Our reputation as buoy-makers is my answer, madam," replied the man. "We are not a firm to send out jerry-made appliances, which at the instant of their requirement fail the unhappy person inside of them."

"Well," said Mrs. Redway, turning the buoy about and critically examining it, "the man for whom this is intended is my husband."

The shopman bowed with a full recognition of her meaning.

"And I wish," she continued, "that the buoy should bear his name: Alexander Beauclerk Redway."

"It shall be put in hand at once, madam," said the shopman, writing down the name, and then awaiting the address which was given to him.

The price was paid, but Mrs. Redway lingered to observe if there were anything else in the shop which might be useful to a man who had fallen overboard and was drowning. Whatever else offered would also be promised by the ship, and after waiting a little, with her head turning from side to side and asking questions about some grotesque garments for diving and so on, Mrs. Redway was accompanied to her carriage by the shopman, and was driven to a well-known West-End restaurant for a light luncheon.

Mr. Redway, on the other hand, stopped his omnibus in the central mud of a roaring bed of traffic, then skipped with the evolutions of a harlequin to the adjacent pavement,

where he walked for some time a greatly elbowed man who could find no defence in his cane-slender umbrella, until he arrived at the doors of the offices of the Union Steamship Company, and entered. He approached a mahogany counter, behind which sat an elderly man in gold-rimmed glasses, and a younger man, and between them the counter was littered with manuscripts, papers, and circular advertisements. Behind, some clerks were at work over books under green-shaded lamps. Besides these people there was nobody in the office; nobody in want of a cabin or a part of the hold for cargo. Mr. Redway marched up to the gentleman in spectacles, who stood up to receive him.

"I see," said he, "that your next ship sails on the 1st of October."

"That is so," responded the man in spectacles, whilst the clerks in the background turned their heads to peer at the visitor.

"I want a cabin on board of her. Can I have one?"

"There is nothing but one deck cabin left," was the answer. "She is a favourite boat, and usually full up at this period of her dates of sailing."

"Cabin on deck," grumbled Mr. Redway. "Why, isn't sleeping on deck like going to Waterford, or on board the steamers which sail from St. Catherine's wharf to the Tyne, carrying cattle and soldiers as a deckload?"

"Oh dear no," answered the spectacled gentleman with a smile; "our deck cabins are as luxurious and comfortable as those below, and are all charged at first-class fares. They are much in demand on account of their breeziness when the ship has passed through the cold weather of the Bay."

"Could I see a section of the *Princess Royal* containing this and other cabins?"

On which the younger of the two at the counter

brought a roll of cartridge-paper, which was expanded and the ends held down. It was an outline of the vessel from stem to stern, and showed every berth, and much other furniture that went to her creation.

"This is the only cabin we can offer you," said the gentleman in spectacles. "You will observe that it is well forward, and to that degree desirable, as it is in a part of the ship where the motion is least felt."

"That's a good point," said Mr. Redway. "And you step out of the cabin door on to this platform, which is called——?"

"The main deck. You descend by this staircase, which conducts you to the doors which admit you to an interior in which the saloon cabins are ranged. But the saloon is also entered by a hatchway which is represented by this arched cover."

Mr. Redway pored upon the sketch saying, "These I suppose are the captain's quarters? And that is the forecastle for the crew? And this is the steam capstan? And I see you carry square yards; in fact, the ship is a brig."

"We only make sail when the wind is favourable," said the younger of the two men. "We are a swift ship, and have got as much as fourteen out of her, but ten is the average, and our computation of arrivals is based upon that number."

"But isn't it uncommonly cold in a deck cabin?" asked Mr. Redway.

"With your door and scuttle shut, with the heat of the machinery not far off, you may lie as snug as though you slept in feathers in the saloon."

"I don't mind telling you," said Mr. Redway, "that my only reason in making this voyage is to arrest the progress of tuberculosis, which has manifested itself very slightly indeed, so far, in the apex of the right lung."

"Then, sir," exclaimed the man in spectacles with a note of enthusiasm in his voice, "this cabin is clearly destined for you; for first of all a consumptive passenger occupied it going out, and occupied it again after he had spent a few weeks on the high land of South Africa, and we had the satisfaction of hearing from him after his arrival at Southampton, that he was perfectly cured; and we further heard that he was particularly enjoined to select a deck cabin, as it was desirable that he should obtain the full benefit of the ocean air from start to finish."

"I see your point," said Mr. Redway; "and as you may be right, and as there remains no alternative, I will engage this cabin at once."

"I must inform you," said the clerk in spectacles, "that you will share it with a gentleman who is going out to join his uncle, a farmer, on some lands not far from Kimberley."

Mr. Redway's face lengthened.

"You spoke of this as the only cabin," said he.

"I should have said the only bunk, sir; for travelling has so vastly increased in this age that we are obliged now to think of cabins as a resting-place by night, and a compartment to be shared by as many as it is built to contain."

Mr. Redway gazed anxiously at the picture of the cabin on the drawing.

"Is there no other berth you could offer the gentleman?" he inquired.

"No. The matter is settled so far as he is concerned. I do not believe, sir, that you will discover any objection to his company. His name is Charles Montgomery——"

"I know a family called Montgomery," interrupted Mr. Redway.

"This gentleman gave us an address at Rugeley."

"Yes, I believe my friends have connections there. What do you say his name is?"

"Charles Montgomery."

"Is he in good health?"

"In perfect health, I should say, considering his object is emigration."

"Which bunk will he take?"

"He has selected the lower berth."

"Which," said the younger man, continuing the spectacled man's sentence, "will put the port-hole at your command, as it opens on to your bed."

"Well, I don't know that I can do better," mused Mr. Redway, hanging over the drawing of the ship. "If he is an agreeable man, I shall not object to a pleasant associate. The cabin is fitted for two, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"I do not love to quarrel over a washstand," said Mr. Redway, "and a companion may sometimes appropriate more than his share of the conveniences of the berth."

"You will be two gentlemen travelling together," said the spectacled clerk, "and, fitted with such conditions, you will always find travel pleasant."

"I'll pay for that berth," said Mr. Redway.

Thereupon ensued the necessary form of exchanging a cheque for a ticket, together with signing papers which insured provisions entirely contrived for the benefit of the directors and shareholders, and after some further questions had been asked, Mr. Redway hailed a passing omnibus, and climbed on top of it in a very meditative mood.

CHAPTER III

MR. REDWAY SAILS

When Mr. Redway and his wife met, which was not for some time after the arrival of Redway at his home, as Mrs. Redway had delayed the hours by making one or two calls, her husband told her the story of his visit to the Union office, and that he was to sleep on deck and share a cabin, and that the *Princess Royal* was the next ship sailing, a fine-looking vessel on paper, of a thousand tons and about ten knots, and she would leave Southampton punctually, on October 1, 1860, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

"Well," said his wife, "it can't be helped, I suppose, but I could have wished you a cabin under deck. It is ridiculous to suppose that a cabin built like a watch tower is as warm against the beat of the rain and wind as a cabin in the saloon."

"There is no use in arguing the point now," said he. "When you have done a thing it's safe and comfortable to look on the bright side of it, because what you have done might have been so easily worse. Besides, instead of one fellow-traveller, I might have had three."

"Have you more than one?"

"No, and that's the bright side of it. Moreover, he's a gentleman. I believe I know some connections of his—his name is Montgomery."

"Is he making the voyage for his health?" interrupted Mrs. Redway, firm and cold, with a manner under-run by a subtle current of anxiety.

"No, he is making it to be a farmer."

There was a pause between the couple, and she said, with a nervous twitch at the extremity of her mouth—

"You must think of packing up."

Here he coughed, and turning the dog off his knee, whereon he had allowed it to rest to please his wife, he got up and walked about the room talking.

"It is curious," he said, "that tuberculosis should cause a cough. How great would be the glory of that man who checks this awful disease as Jenner diminished the fatality of the smallpox to a few people compared to the millions it had previously ravaged! The idea of breathing in deep cold fresh air and eating heartily for the supply of fresh tissue does not seem very sound or profound, because it is so simple. And everything great in the arrest of human suffering is simple, and I believe in the remedy because of its elementary character."

"But will they give you to eat exactly what is calculated to do you good?" asked the wife.

"They have poultry, mutton, plenty of potatoes, good soups, and much other things which I can digest."

"On the whole," continued Mrs. Redway, "on reflection, I am not so dissatisfied with the idea of a deck cabin. To begin with, you are always on deck, whatever happens."

"What do you mean?" asked her husband.

"Suppose the ship sinks. You may be locked up downstairs and can't escape, whereas upstairs you have but to open your door and float safely among the life-boats and rafts about the spot."

His smile was a little melancholy.

"If I could swim——" he began. "But we don't want to talk of shipwrecks."

"At all events," said Mrs. Redway, "I have made provision for one."

He gazed at her, and her large slate-blue eyes took a sharper intelligence from the clean skirl of her hair upon the top of her head.

"What's the provision?" he said anxiously.

"A life-buoy all to yourself, with your name painted upon it."

"Where is it?" he asked, winding his head round about the dining-room.

"It was promised this evening. They had to paint the name. These things are not done—in my fashion at all events—like the easy puffing of a cigarette."

He marched up and down. The idea of a life-buoy as a feature of his voyage in search of prolongation of life, was not at the first blow pleasing to him. It was like telling a man that the midnight walk from Deadman's Well to the Blackbird Inn, seven miles, was as safe as being in bed, and then clapping a revolver in his hand and bidding him keep a bright look-out, as there was never any telling what might happen in a walk in the night.

"I hope it won't come to my wanting that life-buoy," said Mr. Redway. "What put it into your head?"

"I was thinking," she answered, "if the ship went down and the boats were full, and you were left struggling, how you'd manage. It might save your life to slip a life-buoy over your shoulders. I took the width of you from one of your coats, and this morning purchased a beautiful light life-buoy with painted strings around it, and your name will be painted upon it, and I knew that you would hang this life-buoy by your side in your bunk, so that by slipping it on you would be equipped for any emergency."

The disconcerted look passed like a shadow from his face, and he smiled at her and she at him, with one of those smiles which rarely pass between married people when the honeymoon is over, and the roses and lilies of life have by the wizardry of time changed into the troubles of servants, the anxieties of meals, the obligations of the nursery.

After dinner that evening two or three gentlemen called, and one brought a zither with him, but Redway denied himself. He was in no temper for musical entertainments. But shortly after the gentleman had gone away a large parcel was brought into the dining-room, and when opened by the servant who bore it, proved a white life-buoy.

"You can put it down and go," said Mrs. Redway.

The housemaid quitted the room with some astonishment in her face, and told the other servants that the master had purchased a thing which was like them white circles which she had noticed at Ramsgate, Folkestone, and other places.

"Here is your name, you see," cried Mrs. Redway, pointing with her hand, covered with rings, to the letters which formed her husband's name.

They were large, black and conspicuous, and even in the windy flares of a night catastrophe at sea they could not be misread for the name of the ship unless she was so entitled.

"Let me slip it over your head, dear," continued the wife, "and see if my measurement is right."

"I had better do that," he answered, "if I am to use it."

And with slightly irritable eagerness he whipped it over his head and drew his arms out of it. It would have fallen to the floor so as to enable him to step out of it, but his wife reminded him that when he wore it he would

be in the water, which would keep it floated with pressure to his body under the arm-pits.

"So that," she said, "you could not possibly sink."

He picked it up from the floor, put it on the table, and began to rehearse. He was a man gifted with clever hands: for instance, in little jobs about the house he made himself useful. If there was an escape of gas instead of sending for a plumber, he found the leak and stopped it. If a window sash went wrong, he made it go right. He could fit handles to doors, and deal with most things as though he had been apprenticed to the art of them. He immediately understood the life-buoy and its meaning, and placing the white circle on the table he tilted it over his head and shoulders, then hung it up, seized it from the wall and encompassed himself with it, whilst his wife kept time.

"Upon my word," said he, scrutinizing the stitches and the general make of the thing, "this idea of yours is *ben trovato*. I may never need it——"

"Pray God you won't," interjected the wife.

"But if I do, it will prove the most useful piece of furniture I could take with me, and I have to thank you, Mary, for the idea."

"It will make me feel more comfortable when you are away from me," she answered. "I have read about shipwrecks, and have often noticed that the first rush and cry of the bewildered passengers is for the life-buoys, as if they had been taught to believe that in emergency the sailors would take to the boats, and leave them to help themselves."

"It is confoundedly true," said Mr. Redway, again inspecting the buoy.

"And the best of this thing is there is nothing to add to it. You needn't pause to put on floatable leggings and an ærial turban hat, and skimmer gloves for the hands,

without which the buoy is useless. The buoy is all in all; once on you float about, and in shipwreck many who are saved are in buoys."

Just then a servant announced the Chevalier Garcia. He was one of the choice few who would be admitted at such a time, or at all events on such an occasion. He entered with an air of dramatic wildness in his stride. He had had to sing two songs at an adjacent house, and then, being at liberty, drove in a hansom to his friends the Redways. It was not yet ten o'clock: he was in evening dress, and looked large, clean, bejewelled with some rings and an immensely thick watch-chain, and was an entirely operatic figure, with the chandelier deepening the raven hue of his eyebrows and mustache, and improving the light and meaning of his eyes, which, by sway of spirit, turned rapidly into expressions of surprise, dismay, delight, appeal, and many other looks eminently helpful to the singer.

"What have you there, in the name of the Madonna?" he shouted, looking at the buoy with which Mr. Redway had circled his figure, and was holding up with flapper-like elbows. "Have you been stealing this thing from a ship?" he continued, without any preliminary bows or how-d'ye-do's.

"I bought it," answered Mrs. Redway, "to give my husband a chance for his life should his ship meet with disaster."

"But, gracious mercy, my dear lady!" cried the singer; "why not leave these little affairs to the shipowners? They are bound by Act of Parliament to see to the safety of the passengers; and that sort of thing," he added, pointing with an expression of exultation, which he would put on when singing a song of jubilation and triumph, "is like carrying an entrée to a dinner-table which is liberally furnished with everything you can eat."

"I know better," said Mrs. Redway, in her firm tone and hair-tautened look. "Ships are not sufficiently supplied with life-saving appliances of this kind, and if you read your paper, Chevalier, you'd soon find out that heaps were drowned because there were not life-buoys enough for a twentieth of the people."

"But you do not contemplate being drowned," said the Chevalier to Redway, who had picked up the buoy from the carpet, and had placed it on the table.

"It is right to be prepared for being saved whether you are drowned or not," answered Redway.

The Chevalier approached the life-buoy, raised and examined it.

"Put it on," said Mrs. Redway, "and you will feel how safe you must be in the water, when you press the buoy under your arms to keep it in place upon your body."

"No, these things are not in my line," answered Garcia, who was too fine an artist at heart to clothe himself in any way likely to challenge laughter. "But surely," he cried in impassioned notes, "it is better to sink and be out of misery, than to lie in one of these buoys, floating about with the anguish of pain, hopeless expectation, thirst and hunger depicted upon your face, down which is glued your hatless hair, whilst overhead, close by, fly a number of huge carrion sea-fowl, waiting to stoop and turn your manliness into a mask."

"This is hardly the language to address to a man on the eve of making a voyage to recover his health," said Mrs. Redway in her calm, cold way, not at all shocked, because her frigid capacity of realizing, and her practical views, keen as the arrows of light she shot from her large, chilly eyes, kept her mind steady. Mr. Redway, however, was more impressionable, perhaps because he might prove to be the hero of the Chevalier's theme.

"If a man," he said, "is to rot as you say, rot he will,

and as to desiring to die, sooner than suffer, I will give you the toothache and a knife, and invite you to the alternative of cutting your throat or having your tooth out. This buoy will hang close at hand in my bunk, and if I had not such a thing, if wanted, I might rush on deck and find myself a drowning man, and miss opportunities by which I might be saved if I could keep myself afloat."

"You interpret me well, Alexander," said the wife. "Where have you been singing, Chevalier?"

"Oh, don't mention the trivialities of song," answered Garcia, in the deep tones which vibrated, say, in his rendering of "Oh, let me like a Soldier fall!" "You have there"—pointing to the buoy—"an illustration of Death. As soon talk of Verdi's last opera in a churchyard. At what hour does your ship leave?"

"Shortly after noon."

"I am afraid, my dear friend, I shall be unable to see you off. I have an engagement that will detain me throughout the morning of the first."

"I'd rather you would not come," said Redway. "I don't want to be seen off. I shall say good-bye to my wife here, so that the voyage begins at Bayswater. I have some knowledge of seeings off. There is the crowd, the bustle, the worry of luggage, the difficulty of distinguishing between the captain and steward, the incivility with which you are met by every creature you address, though with the utmost courtesy and obvious bewilderment. And then there is the farewell to be said at last. It unmans you. If I am to kiss, I will kiss at a distance from the scene of final departure. The customs of friends meeting in the cabin, calling for champagne, drinking to the voyager's health, God-blessing him, the embracing of those who are dear to him, may heighten the spirits of most who say good-bye, but it leaves the poor devil, the unhappy man who is the subject of all this unseasonable

conviviality, the most dejected and wretched of objects that ever looked at a pier or wharf over a ship's side."

Two days before the ship sailed Mr. Redway sent his baggage to Southampton. It was not considerable. It consisted of one trunk and a couple of portmanteaux on which his name was painted. The portmanteaux were for his private berth, the box for the hold, where it could be come at when any portion of its contents were wanted.

On the forenoon of the first, Redway took farewell of his wife. He had no sisters, no relations to encumber his departure. His wife's people kept at a distance, and the couple said good-bye alone. The occasion was pathetic, because the absence of this man probably meant life or death; yet no particular sorrow marked the kiss and the lingering hand-grasp. The wife discovered no sedulousness by any sort of wimpering bustle in her questions as to whether he had remembered this, if *that* had been packed, if he was sure of all things connected with his sailing.

Her eyes might perhaps have taken a softness not usual to them, when her lips forsook his, and when in a second kiss his lips left her brow. She stood on the threshold of the open hall door with her dog under her arm, and when the four-wheeler drove off, she kissed her hand and hastily withdrew, being one of those who, like Lord Nelson, heartily hate to be stared at.

Mr. Redway arrived at Waterloo. The Company had provided him with a ticket. He entered one of the ill-kept, ill-clothed, and ill-built carriages of a railway that has ever lagged in the race of the locomotive and its burden, and in due course arrived at Southampton about an hour before the sailing of the ship. She lay at the quay side clamorous with preparation. Blue Peter blew from her foremast head.

In those days the departure of a steamer was an event of moment. Most of her people were going away for

good; many on tours of health; many on business to distant parts, where they would stay until their hair turned grey, and whence they would return and find many graves of dear ones to visit.

The *Princess Royal* was full of people of all sorts, including dock labourers, and many friends and idle spectators loaded the quay side. The ship, however, was to be made out when Mr. Redway drove to the spot beyond which he could not travel on four wheels. There was no one to greet him; no one to meet him; his only friend was a man who carried his hand-bag, which was stuffed to an inconvenient weight.

The ship was a screw of considerable beam for her length. She was round in the bows and elliptical in the stern, and she carried one black funnel. She had two masts, each of them fitted with large square yards, mounting to royals, and her white canvas was neatly furled with a harbour or man-o'-war bunt. The red flag flew at her peak, and the Company's flag at her main-royal masthead.

Mr. Redway took his bag from the man, and stepped over the side. He looked about him with bewilderment. Plenty of people stood about talking, but he did not know whom to address. The planks were very white; the insides of the bulwark fresh from the painter's hands; the bridge that spanned the ship, with its adjuncts of wheel-house, captain's cabin, and the like, gave the fabric a clumsy look, with its pole-compass, its bleached weather-cloth, its overhanging rails. A long house used by the cooks ran just abaft this superstructure, and forward you saw the ship's top-gallant forecastle, a raised deck with a drunken seaman or two lolling and laughing and pointing, and others going and coming on the fifty errands of a ship's departure. Mr. Redway was about to accost a small group of people who stood in earnest conversation near the gangway, when his eyes were taken by an officer

of the ship leaning over the rail, and talking apparently to some people in a boat alongside. The brass buttons on his coat and the gilt lace upon his cap sufficiently indicated some sort of distinction in the bill of the ship's company. He made his way to him over hatches, ropes, and raffle, and said—

"Pray, sir, are you one of the mates?"

"Third mate," was the answer of the tall fine young man, who turned a sunburnt face upon the questioner.

"My name is Redway, and I want to know where my berth is."

"Go straight away through one of those doors into the saloon," answered the third mate. "Ask for the head steward, and he'll put you in the way of what you want."

Mr. Redway made his way through the port door, and found himself in the interior of a considerable cabin or deck-house, fitted pleasantly with windows or port-holes, mirrors, pictures, brass lamps, and a long table with chairs, whilst on either hand went a row of small cabins of a uniform size, save that the starboard after cabin was reserved for the captain's use when he did not choose to occupy the sofa in the chart-room. A number of people were in this saloon, coming in and out of the cabins, and some of them were writing letters. A Dutchman was talking to the large, fat English chief steward at the foot of the table.

"I tells you," said the Dutchman, "dot der vine you call port last voyage vas no port, and it vas not right to be sold as such."

"It was as fine a quality of port as ever sailed out of Southampton," answered the steward. "But I dare say there are some folks who can't tell the difference between port and tarragona."

"I vas not come," said the Dutchman, "to listen to

sheek. I have already tried der port on board, and I shall tell der captain she vas dom bad."

Mr. Redway took the opportunity of the few moments' silence that fell to inquire where his bedroom was, and was told to go up the ladder leading to the poop. This ascertained, he was about to trouble the head steward again with some questions about his baggage, when he was so fiercely interrupted by the Dutchman breaking forth about the quality of the port on board that he went out, ascended the steps, and without preliminary knocking opened the door of the berth whose position had been given him, and entered.

He had imagined to find himself alone, instead of which there leaned against the side of the berth a man in shirt and trousers hauling on a Wellington boot. He was of the same bulk and build as Redway, but in no other way resembled him, this man being smooth shaven, the hair of his head being slightly darker than Redway's, whilst Redway, as we know, wore the curled mustache and trimmed beard of the first Charles, as shown by the engraver in Sir Henry Wotton's collection. The cabin was pretty full of luggage. The lower bunk was loaded with shirts, coats of different kinds, and a variety of articles of dress, which had been removed from a large tin box labelled "C. M." A few clothes were hanging up, a rifle case leaned in a corner, a small collection of books stood upon the deck. A washstand occupied a corner near the door, and over it hung a small square of looking-glass. The eye was satiated when it had taken in two small chairs and two ordinary-sized bunks, in the upper of which was placed Mr. Redway's luggage.

"So we are to be partners in this bedroom?" said Mr. Montgomery, continuing to haul on his boots whilst he turned his head to address Mr. Redway.

"That was the only bunk," answered Mr. Redway,

pointing to his sleeping-place, "they had to offer me."

"And this was the only cabin for me to choose," answered Montgomery.

"There is scarcely room for comfort," said Redway, looking round him.

"You don't go to sea for comfort," answered Montgomery. "You go because you want to reach a place."

"That's not my case," answered Redway.

Montgomery stared at him.

"I am going to sea," continued Redway, "to find out if the fresh air of the ocean, and, as I hope, the nourishing food at the table, will exterminate a hint of tuberculosis which is present in the apex of my right lung, and has set up a nasty cough."

"There is nothing else to be done," said Montgomery, putting on his waistcoat. "You're wise to choose a foremost deck cabin. Steam always makes a breeze for itself, and with this foremost and beam windows wide open you are bound, whether you are on deck or in here, to breathe in as much fresh air as your trouble needs."

Redway looked highly pleased, and said he was glad to hear he had done well.

"Your name, I perceive, is Redway," said Mr. Montgomery. "It is abundantly big on that life-buoy atop of your portmanteau."

"And yours, I was told at the office, is Charles Montgomery," answered Mr. Redway. "Do you belong to the Montgomeries of Rugeley, made famous by Palmer?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"I have met you, I think, somewhere in the hunting-field."

"Very likely," answered Montgomery; "and now you recall the incident, I believe I recollect your name."

"Well, it draws the sting out of a double berth to

know that you are lying atop of a friend," said Redway. "What is taking you to the Cape?"

"I am going to an uncle who has a farm; and as I am fond of horseback, and cannot easily find a living in London, I accepted Uncle Joe's offer, and mean to stick; for money has attractions, whether made in South Africa or in South Australia, but London has none. For how tired a man becomes of the endless pavements of the streets, the shapeless, streaming crowds, most of them living in a way fit only to read by the light of the policeman's bull's-eye, the music-hall which grows dull with iteration of buffoonery and the cheapest sentiment that God ever frowned upon, the theatre with its immoral undertone loud enough to be heard through the whining cant of the surface; the society which are no friends of yours if you are poor; and the humbug, the general, the great flood-like spread of insincerity, of which the most dangerous expression is the fashionable doctor, the most contemptible the fashionable preacher, the most ignoble the millionaire who parts with his thousands to royalty, and the vulgarest the swarms of snobs who are sanctified by the gracious countenance of sovereignty, and who, keeping the regal abodes in view, where no money is wanted, where all is pomp, ceremony, and expectation of further ennoblement, utterly neglect and forget the countless thousands who are toiling in the great poverty whose narrative, as told by the poet Hood, makes the best of us, the true and the sympathetic, weep almost in those tears of blood with which Hood wrote his verses."

As Montgomery apparently stood well, socially speaking, Redway was desirous of disclosing to their fullest glare his own sidelights which he burnt in his voyage of life. So he said—

"Yes, what you say is very true. My people came from Wiltshire, where the residence of the head of the

family is York Manor. My father was the owner's cousin once removed, and I have recollections of being taken down there by him, and introduced to a portly man, tall and dark, with a ruddy face and a white frill, who gave me strong beer to drink when water was alone fit for me. He had a fine collection of pictures, which he foolishly sold. They had taken years to collect, and some were heirlooms. They comprised Charles I., Charles II., Nell Gwynne, James Duke of York, a fine picture of Cromwell with Milton standing beside him, the Duke of Monmouth, Churchill when a young man, and others, the royal portion of whom," added Mr. Redway, "I may legitimately claim as progenitors."

"Then you belong to the St. Albans' family?"

Redway slightly bowed, and their eyes met on the name of "Beauclerk" painted on the buoy in the bunk.

"What made you lay that resource in?" inquired Montgomery, who had put on his coat and cap preparatory to going on deck. "It's few who go to sea who carry such things, for few men contemplate drowning when they make a voyage, and nothing could be fuller of such a contemplation than a life-buoy."

"It was the gift of my wife," answered Redway. "She fancied I should be safer with that buoy than without, and I accepted it to please her."

"Well, I don't know," said Montgomery. "Some women have a gift of foresight which, if men possessed it and dared to exercise it, would fill their coffers with millions by merely bearing or bulling stocks. Where shall you hang that buoy?"

"Inside my bunk, ready to my hand," answered Redway.

"Yes, get a small nail from the steward or carpenter, if you can find him, where the buoy will hang clear of your face when it swings with the heel of the ship. See

that you can lift it off the nail just as easily as you take down a hat in a hall, and don't go securing it like they secure the buoys and other life-saving contrivances which the ship would leave afloat, such as hatch-covers and gratings, if they were not riveted and fixed as though the builders had given a warranty of their going down with the vessel, and leaving nothing afloat to catch hold of.'

"Your views are so sound," said Mr. Redway, "that I wonder you did not provide yourself with some means of escape in a time of danger."

"Thoughts of a time of danger never trouble me," replied Montgomery, laughing. "When your bell rings you've got to answer the summons, and no skeleton hand is going to keep you afloat in your buoy until something comes along to take you up."

"It is the happiest state, after all," said Mr. Redway.

And then they made certain proposals with regard to the disposition of the furniture in the berth, and when they went on deck the ship had dropped her fasts, had cleared the gates, and was aiming in the direction of the Needles for the open Channel. They had heard no singing out—nothing but a letting off of steam, a slow and solemn vibration, as though something enormous and heavy was striking the ship every second or two. The decks were comparatively clear, as the sailing-berth of land was too far off for the roar of the throat or the melancholy wave of the pocket-handkerchief. The day was a fine autumn afternoon. The ship moved slowly through the troubles that beset her path. They screwed a vessel in those days through the water until she had gone clear of all obstructions, as though something hung dangerously close under her bows. She was quite unlike the modern steamer, for whom the *Princess Royal* would have made a long-boat, who sweeps through the foggy evening and through the

thick of a harbour with the same velocity as her pace to New York, and whose picture is nothing but a line or belt of white and brilliant light, over which, in the damp and blowing haze, there loom the outlines of a broadside, several funnels, and three or four masts.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE CHOPS

At six the first dinner-bell rang. At half-past six the saloon passengers sat down to dinner. They were usually headed by the captain, but on this occasion the skipper wisely kept the bridge. It was October—the night had descended. Stars of the sea flashed round about, and stars of the sky glowed in the middle air along the seaboard. Shadows of ships under sail, tall in the gloom of the evening, frequent in apparition—for you might count sixty sailing-ships to one funnel in those days—passed by like the shadow of squalls in the fresh night-dyed breeze.

The *Princess Royal* was now feeling the weight of the wide Channel at her fore-foot, and her motions would naturally be, through her proportions, sluggish, decisive, and unseasonably determinable by a sensitive stomach. A number of guests were seated at the long table over which the lamps waved in globes of light. Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Redway sat over against each other. Amongst the others were gentlemen named Tabor, Irvine, Constable, and one or two others, most of whom carried their wives and children. These with the surgeon and the mate made up the look of a dinner-party. Nor was the picture unworthy of such an appellation; flowers swung overhead, ferns prettily decorated the pillars, the snow-white table-cloth furnished new lights and sparkles

to the silver and glass. The food was as good as it is now, having regard to the facilities which have grown up to the steward's hand and to the facilities which make the saloon of a fine steamer as sumptuous in finish and regaling and satisfying in meats and drinks as the dining-hall of the greatest London hotel.

But even if the *Princess Royal* had been furnished with a view to a marine procession round the world, there was no magic in the hammer that rivetted her, in the constructor who devised her, in the owners who spent their shareholders' money upon her, in the wonderful new screw that rotated under water, in triple-expansion engines, and boilers formed of tubes, to guarantee that she would not move with the movements of the sea. It was consistent, therefore, with the laws of ocean-travel that a lady should spring from her seat hurriedly at sight of the plate of soup that was placed before her and disappear in her cabin, and that a gentleman should greet the arrival of the fish by falling off his chair and being helped by the steward into his bunk.

After this the dinner proceeded with the solemn gravity practised by English travellers when they face one another for the first time. The only voice that was unduly raised was the Dutchman's, who after ordering a bottle of port, commanded the head steward to come to him and then asked him to taste "dot" and to tell him in his own English "vat it vas." It was impossible for the head steward to conduct himself after such a manner as the Dutchman had commanded; therefore, after declaring it was the best drop of port that was then sailing out of Southampton, he walked off with an indignant face, leaving Mynheer to assure his neighbour that they manufactured in several places in Germany port, sherry and champagne composed almost entirely of chemicals, but which no man dared denounce as frauds as he was

immediately put down by others, who were drinking the stuff, as a person of sickly tastes and one who was probably drinking good wine for the first time. He continued to thunder against the port of the ship until, finding that no notice was taken of his remarks, he began furtively to help himself to the wine, and before the dinner was over a waiter had removed the empty bottle.

It was a little after eight when the passengers left the cabin, some for their berths to complete the ordering of them, some for the deck to enjoy the freshness of the night. There was not much to be seen on deck. There seldom is at night, unless the atmosphere be radiant with moonlight and starlight. The silence of darkness was upon the ship, and you heard much that you could not have heard in the day: the water ejected from the side in steady throbs; the regular seething of salt whiteness at the fore-foot, with now and again a louder snarl when she spooned the black swell with some large thrust of bows; the dark pillar of the funnel breaking into dense volumes of smoke replacing the thousand stars it extinguished by the spangles of the furnaces; the two masts which rose mean and meagre from the level of a platform which would have carried twice their height and twice their breadth from clew to clew. A figure painted in dusk, moves to and fro on the bridge; other figures were about the decks, more loafing than walking, with their cloaks wrapped about them, and the women of the 'tween-decks comfortably be-shawled, and voices might be heard amid that dim expanse of waters, thin as the wire-like line of a minute meteor glancing with but little light through the imperial halls of height and solitude.

Mr. Redway and Mr. Montgomery, being cabin-fellows, and, in a manner of speaking, known to each other, naturally came together when the first shipdeck walk was to be taken. Mr. Redway lighted a cigarette,

Mr. Montgomery a cigar. Gentlemen might smoke in the gangway. Shipowners and builders had not then thought of smoking-rooms.

"I presume you are alone," said Mr. Montgomery.

"Moses was never more alone in the bulrushes," answered Mr. Redway.

"Is there a Mrs. Redway?"

"Just a little," answered Redway; "and you, by travelling alone with your gun, I suspect, have not contracted any obligation with the young and the fair which cannot be dispersed by the purse."

"A good wife's a good thing," said Mr. Montgomery. "If I find myself comfortable, with prospects enlarging the prison-house which the arrival of small babies compels, I may probably go in for a female Boer."

"I don't think I could stand such a thing," answered Redway. "How could you take her to England and introduce her to your friends?" said he, whose notions of a Boer woman were those of a female whose back view gave you sides and hips almost straight, and shoulders wide enough to carry the furniture of her house and her old man smoking his pipe on top of it.

"Don't you see," answered Mr. Montgomery, "that I am leaving England as much to get money and settle, as to turn my back upon the people there, called society? My wife would never intrude. I should like her as pretty as I have seen many Flemish girls, and you may guarantee their staunchness, and rest assured they are as honest as they are courageous, and that they'll fire a rifle to protect their homes, at the sight of which piece an English woman would faint."

"I differ from you," answered Redway; "but I am for holding that every man should possess an opinion and stick to it, if he believes it true. There is one quality in a man that I cannot suffer, and which stinks in my

nostrils—and that is the vice of telling lies. A man who tells lies makes you a liar because you repeat what he says, and people who know better, say, 'What a liar Redway is.' It is frightful to be transformed into the character you hate. I am grateful to know that of all the evil things my good-natured neighbours may say of me, they cannot call me a liar."

Mr. Montgomery, who was desirous of changing the subject, stopped to relight his cigar, and bid Mr. Redway light another cigarette.

"Steam's a wonderful thing," said he, standing close to the coaming of the engine-room hatchway. "There is no limit to its powers; it wants nothing but the application of them. We are doing about ten now. Yonder old Geordie, knocking her mast-heads against the stars, is probably washing along at about four-and-a-half. A ship that goes ten will in the course of fifteen years go fifteen knots, and every year afterwards she'll witness an increase that'll bring New York within a week."

Mr. Redway, in spite of the internal and invisible champing and powerful throbbing of a giant-heart suggestive of future expansion to a degree that nothing but the human brains could approach, exclaimed—

"I can't agree with you. All matter has limitation. The engine and the ship are matter, hence they have their limitation."

"But where do they stop?" said Mr. Montgomery.

"Probably at the first terrible shipwreck of a steamer."

Mr. Montgomery began to sing. Mr. Redway said that the smell made him feel a little swoony, and Mr. Montgomery, throwing the remains of his cigar overboard, followed Mr. Redway on to the poop. The saloon, as, by the way, it was not *then* called, looked glittering and gay by contrast with the black walls that came to its

sides. Two gentlemen were seated at the table, but the women and children had disappeared. A few figures moved in the dusk on the poop. They wore cloaks, two or three of them sugar-loafed hats, and, being sea-sick, exerted their limbs with caution. In fact, if each man had held concealed a naked dagger, the picture of a foreign villain would have been painted with admirable expression in the light that faintly touched them. The captain walked with a brace of them. The officer of the watch was on the bridge. Two men were on the look-out. The side lights and white mast light burnt with a steady stare into the darkness. The ship was well watched; she was a black and shapely shadow that swept with the noise of a mill-race, when heard in summer stillness, over the black surface which was opening into the Chops.

Captain Carlton, the master of the *Princess Royal*, was commodore of the small fleet; his face was much ploughed by long voyages in ships which were kept sailing about the globe for three years. No man knew the sea better than he. There was no form of the life out of which he had not grasped solid masses of experience. He was not highly proud of steam, but was willing to navigate it, leaving all the rest to the engineer, in whose hands, he said, the whole and real command of the steamship would ultimately be placed, for to what sailor would be useful the knowledge of the canvas that was then afloat? They might as well moor a ship of Troy with a view to training English boys to serve in British steam men-of-war. As he walked he sent sharp looks from side to side and over the bows.

Most old women live in horror of fire, and Carlton's secret fear was collision. He said to one of his companions—

"You are no doubt aware, sir, that our speed, though

quiet, is equal to that of a ship under full sail blown along by the favourable force at ten nautical miles an hour."

"It is not likely," said the other, "that we shall hear anything more wonderful this century."

"Why don't the Government accept steam for the Australian mails?" said the captain's other companion. "There is nothing but corruption and bribery going on at the Post-office. Why don't they send the mails by steam to the Cape, and thence by sail to Australia? instead of which, what do they do? A man who had suffered greatly from postal delays assured me he could enumerate a hundred instances of results inconvenient and perplexing, ludicrous or truly lamentable, which arose from the irregularity of the mails from Europe. The Government are chiefly responsible, because they choose certain vessels as Post-office packets. These very frequently make the slowest passage in the year. The only vessels compelled under fine to sail from London on a fixed day, are so deeply laden that lighter ships arrive a month earlier than the time due for the signalling of the ship with the mails. You may figure the consequences."

"I have commanded such ships, sir," said the skipper. "Take the case of a Sydney lady known to me, who received news that her younger sister was about to become a mother, and it was not until some weeks later that the second letter arrived, announcing the fact that the younger sister had been married. I have heard a gentleman say that he had received letters dated in London eleven weeks after the sender had become his wife in Sydney."

"And those slow ships are still afloat?" said one of the captain's friends.

"I could name you a dozen out of the East India Docks," was the answer.

Here Mr. Redway, whom Mr. Montgomery had deserted for a glass of grog, joined the captain and his companions.

"What was that about slow-sailing ships?" he inquired.

"Four months to Sydney from London," was the answer.

"And sometimes five," added the captain.

"No wonder emigration doesn't go ahead," said the captain's second companion.

"Four months to Sydney!" cried Mr. Redway. "And it's good for me to be on the ocean as long as possible. What's the fare?"

"From sixty to ninety guineas," answered the captain.

"Upon my word," said Mr. Redway, "the remedy of a sailing-ship should have been insisted on. Why, I paid this money to go to the Cape and back, which is a hop, jump, and a leap, and t'other at the extreme is ninety guineas, with perhaps twelve months of fresh air."

"Why not take ship to the Australias from the Cape?" said Captain Carlton.

"Too late by being too expensive," said Mr. Redway.

"What is the character of your disease?" inquired the captain's second companion.

"They tell me I have tuberculosis in the right lung, and that my cough is due to it," answered Mr. Redway, who was delighted to discuss his illness.

"Oh well," was the cheering remark of the second companion, "I have known a man live several years on one lung."

"We don't want to hear of such cases," said Mr. Redway. "Who feels pleasure in the idea of living on one lung?"

"Is that you, doctor?" cried the captain to a shadow to leeward.

"Yes, sir." And the shadow broke from its companion, and stepped over to the captain.

"Is it possible," demanded the captain, "for a person to live on one lung?"

"Look here, doctor," cried Mr. Redway, "I don't want to hear any discussion on that side of the subject. The simple question is, I am said to have the microbe in the apex of the right lung. The point is, not can I breathe with my left lung, but can I keep both lungs?"

"What have your doctors told you?" said the medical officer, and the captain and his two companions continued their walk, whilst Mr. Redway held the doctor engaged in a discussion of his complaint for at least a quarter of an hour, which certainly would have been prolonged but for the doctor's ending it by saying, "I am going below for a glass of grog. Are you bound that way?"

"The night-air cannot be good," said Redway. "I'll follow you."

"Excuse me," said the doctor, "there are two or three people aft in this ship who suffer from throat and chest complaints, and I should feel much obliged if in their presence you would remain silent about an affection which we have yet to learn is not hypothetical."

Mr. Redway retired early. Without being sea-sick, he suffered from malaise. He left Mr. Montgomery at table drinking hot rum and water with a stroke of the lemon in it. It was cold on deck. It blew about two points on the starboard bow, and the speed of the ship raised it to about thirty miles an hour. In fact, it had come on to blow whilst Mr. Redway was on deck, and the keenness of the night chill was in its fuller weight. All square sail was furled. They had hung to the fore and aft canvas till it had begun to flutter like a flag in the wind, which proved in old sea parlance that the

steamer was keeping her course, but that the breeze was heading her, and all fore and aft canvas had been hauled down a little while before the doctor suggested a glass of grog in the cabin below. Her motions were sickly, as they got no buoyancy from sail, and each lurch to port and then to starboard dislocated the human organism, and more than one voice made dolorous outcry in a muffled note behind a cabin-door.

Mr. Redway found the bracket-lamp alight, and he stood a minute surveying his sea-bedroom. He had climbed some steps to reach it, and the warming influence of the glass of brandy he had drunk had been blown off him in his passage from the saloon to his cabin. His bunk was made extremely nautical by the life-buoy which hung by a nail within easy reach of his hand. The sight of it seemed to afford him a melancholy satisfaction. The cabin had been well stowed, and Mr. Redway only hoped that Mr. Montgomery did not snore, or that he was not one of the men who manage to go to bed and contrive to let the sleepers around know that his boots are strong and durable; and that he had not a habit of throwing his coat at the back of a chair with the art which is certain to pitch the chair over with a crash.

At about nine o'clock Mr. Redway was in bed, and in spite of the nausea and frequent glances at the life-buoy, and at the picture in which he made a figure, he was sleeping as soundly as though it were one o'clock and he were in bed with his wife, ignorant as his waistcoat whether he was sheltered by immovable brick or dancing iron.

When he awoke in the morning the ship was labouring in heavy weather. Mr. Montgomery, who lay with the bed-clothes up to his chin, said he should not turn out until the weather moderated. There is a greal deal of noise in a steamer when she thrusts, jerks, dives, and leaps

along her course. Then it is that the song of the engine-room is never more articulate, nor its motions fiercer. In the deep leaps of the *Princess Royal* you could catch sight, deep down, of the figure of a stoker passing like a Lilliputian athwart the red and glorious glare made by a suddenly opened furnace. It was as though bands of hidden giants were flinging monstrous pokers, shovels and tongs at opponents armed with fenders. Through his cabin window Mr. Redway could see the ship. She was taking it in in white water over the bows. The green seas at the mouth of the Thames were running at her like hills in an earthquake. A large north-country brig about a mile distant, dirty-green in hull, dirtier still in ill-cut canvas, was sinking out of sight, and then reappearing to her bilge streaks, a wild picture of the ocean's strength; it was like a procession of feline monsters sporting with a half-dead limb-trailing mouse. The decks were wet, and all the swabbing in the world could not keep them dry. As the steamer lifted her nose the water rushed like a swollen gutter to the scuppers under the poop ladders, in a strangled hiss that made things look as wet to the eye as they were to the ear. But there was no lack of life in the ship. You felt it in the plank into which the propeller infused a tremble which lasted with its revolutions. You saw it in the smoke blown low from the tall lean chimney, whence the sooty stuff went squittering like shivered glass down over the sternward race of the weather-polished back of the seas. The smoke from the galley fire was full and dirty. It seemed—or was it fancy?—to scent the blowing atmosphere it swept through with delicate aromas of fried fish, coffee, bacon, and other good cheer which greet the nostrils and appease the appetite of the hungry forenoon hour.

Mr. Redway dressed himself calmly. He shaved all but the Caroline growth in the little square of looking-

glass, which, being fixed against the bulk-head, did not swing with the ship. Such was his jealousy of his looks that at all hazard, and even peril, he must carry the Charles beard and curled mustache away with him wherever he went. Mr. Montgomery lay looking at him with one eye over the edge of his coverlet, and said to him, knowing his weakness, and less disposed to keep his bed through nausea than through the comparative comfort of breakfasting in his bunk, and lazily rising in his own good time—

"I say, Redway, your likeness to Charles I. comes out very strong this morning."

"Glad you see it," answered Redway. "After all, you cannot discover a tradition better than by a likeness."

"True," said Mr. Montgomery, in no very clear voice. "But as you claim the Duke of St. Albans as a connection——"

"He is several times removed from my father, who often visited him, and took me with him when I was not too young to store my mind with the pictures and splendours which you shall find in the Duke's residence——"

"No," exclaimed Montgomery; "what I mean is, how is it that your face, which directly comes from Charles I., whose wife was Henrietta Maria of France, should not resemble the face of Charles II., whose pudding nose and insignificant mustache and general deportment made him very unlike his father? Amongst your progenitors you must reckon wholly upon Nell Gwynne for the royal blood that is in your veins, and I submit that Nell Gwynne did not in face or fascination express the same things as the wife of the man who lost his head."

"Nell was not his wife," answered Mr. Redway.

"But she answered the purpose so far as you are concerned," exclaimed Montgomery.

"Well, you must be replied to in this way," said Mr. Redway. "The first Charles's character was much too strong for his son, whose spirit, though not his person, he dominated, so that in the offspring by Nell Gwynne, not the second, but the first Charles reappeared."

"A clever misconstruction," said Mr. Montgomery. "Isn't it blowing a fresh gale?"

"I can just feel my legs," answered Mr. Redway.

"Get out into the air as soon as you can," said Mr. Montgomery. "Suck in all the viewless forces of the wind; they will wither and kill your tuberculosis. There is the second breakfast-bell. Go, please, and tell one of the stewards to come to me!"

The breakfast-table was not richly tenanted that morning. Scarcely more than a dozen sat down. A number of trays went into the cabins, and were brought out much as they were taken in. Who devours the saloon or first-class waste at sea in big steamers I am at a loss to know. They cannot be making rehashes out of the same dish for long without detection. There are stuffs which fade fast, and become dangerous as poisons: these are tinned, and should be eaten at once when opened. The ice in the fore-peak, or the freezing-room forward, undoubtedly arrests decay, but the *Princess Royal* and the numberless passenger-ships of her own, an earlier, and a far later day, were providing that much food should be wasted by the saloon table. This might easily have been remedied by giving poor Jack in his forecastle the stuff that went no one knows where; but it was the habit to treat sailors as dogs. Who would think of sending the remains of a delicate *entrée* to a dog's kennel? What captain would dream of treating his sailors with a good "blow out" once or twice a week with the broken remaining victuals of the saloon regale?

There is much thievery on earth, but little that excels

the thievery that is practised on a ship from the hour when she sits with empty bunkers alongside a berth, or clings by her fasts to the side of the wall where she will receive a cargo that shall submerge the official load-mark.

The characters of the passengers of the *Princess Royal* do not enter into this narrative. They come and go as being in their place, but their individual histories, though more or less interesting, will be chapters unwritten in this novel. Amongst the people who sat at that breakfast-table, in addition, of course, to the captain, was the chief engineer, who, with the captain, mate, and doctor, in fine or moderate weather, usually ate in the saloon. The chief engineer—who on board ship is commonly called the chief, though the captain accepted the responsibility of the navigation—was undoubtedly lord of the ship. He knew everything that the captain and mates knew, and he knew everything that the captain and mates did not know. If anything went wrong in the engine-room and confounded the captain and reduced the mates to senseless and dangerous suggestions, at which the most ignorant trimmer would have laughed, the chief engineer and his subordinates were always there to point out the defect and to remedy it, so as, in most cases, to make the ship whole again and faithful to her time of arrival. And yet this fine fellow, whose practical experience of the steamship was not outweighed by the special experience of every soul on the articles—this noble and wide-minded man of science and the sea, was for a long time unfit by education and by manners to dine at the table of a captain whose pertness and ignorance would have disqualified him from a seat at the mess of the engineers when they dined apart; he was even thought too contemptible, socially and by rating, to sit at meals with little midshipmen. But the globe goes round; the sunny portion that was, is now in darkness, and, before the sun flames upon the old places,

many of them may have disappeared as completely as Nineveh or the buried cities of South America. The sun has gone round with the engineer. It is he who really commands the ship. The old traditions of the cocked hat are still permitted by that narrowest-headed of all Admiralties—the British—to keep the place that will one day be the engineer's.

Mr. Redway was leaving the table.

"The wind is keen, sir," said the captain, "and you will do well to clothe yourself warmly."

The doctor said he would be happy to look in upon him and have a conversation in his, Mr. Redway's, cabin. Mr. Redway passed out, being the first to leave the cabin-table, and went on deck, where he paused, with the eye of an artist, to gaze with delight at a stupendous and magnificent scene of running waters. The ocean was of a deep green, with little help from tint of clouds that sailed over it full-breasted, with here and there a squall of rain darkening their sunward frontage, with coursers of the wind bursting from them like unleashed hounds taking to the water and pouring foam with mighty strokes. The sky floated broken in these clouds, and overhead the lagoon was blue, and, in the far distance, green; and here and there a shaft of rainbow ran, supporting its lagoon, with the smooth, cream-like bulk of vapour from which it depended. There were two or three sailing-ships in sight, plunging their bows to their gammoning; and two were for England, and flew homewards on fearless, wide-spread pinions. But the third, a small vessel, was hove to, partially dismasted, under a reefed topsail and fore-topmast staysail; and this ship furnished to the eye such a detail of wrack and wrath that no artist could have wished for a more perfect image to express distress upon the sea. The wind still sharply headed the steamer's course, and she soughed through the lofty yellow ridges,

hurling snow in vanishing visions to the height of her funnel, and in regular alternations the wreck sank out of sight of her companion. Sea-birds scattered about her. The main-mast, with its main-top attached by its futtock-rigging, darted from the sea alongside like a giant levelling his javelin at the fabric flying past, and then, with a roar of disappointment, withdrawing it.

Mr. Redway paused to look about him. Some third-class people were assembled forward under the lee of the forecastle. They carried the air of ragged, penniless Jews, with a mixture of Italian or Portuguese. And what with the firemen, the sailors, the waiters, they made all that part of the ship as squalid as an East-End slum. Mr. Redway ascended the poop-ladder, and entered his cabin for a coat and a neckcloth. Mr. Montgomery was still in bed, and Mr. Redway relieved him of his tray, which he had bared of its food, by setting it on the deck, where it began to slide, without notice from either gentlemen.

"How are you feeling now?" asked Mr. Redway.

"Merely beddish. What's there to turn out for? Here I'll eat my lunch, and nobody but you and the waiter may see me until to-morrow morning. I am one who makes travel easy. A fast ship, a cosy cabin, good food upon which the most delicate stomach may rest, a novel by George Eliot, Dickens, or some one of the other writers in that row of books under my bunk—this is my idea of passing the time. The hours go, and I say to myself, 'Another day has set; I am nearer by another pace to the most noble gift which God can offer us—eternal rest.' I am sure of *that*, and approach the inevitable as comfortably as my spirits and my purse will permit."

"Well, sir," said Redway, "I am going out to breathe. I am going out to lengthen, with God's help, the journey which you view with nonchalance."

"Before you go, will you hand me that pipe and

tobacco-pouch and a box of matches which you'll find on the shelf at the top of this soothing resting-place?"

This was done. Mr. Redway found and put on a thick coat, and wrapped a warm woollen comforter round his neck. He then put on a warm cap, with earlets, and a pair of thick gloves. Thus equipped, he nodded to his companion, and stepped forth into the half gale which the wind had risen to.

CHAPTER V

MR. REDWAY BEGINS A LETTER

As he passed over the coaming of his cabin the captain stepped over the top step of the poop-ladder and said, "You are warm enough to go a-whaling. You're quite right. The breeze hereabouts, when fresh, is full of needles, and they'll pierce the best cloth that the West of England can turn out."

"My duty is to eat and breathe," said Mr. Redway. "Have you carried many consumptive patients in your time?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many, approximately?"

"Oh," cried the captain, cheerily, "a full many; enough to crowd a long table full of men, women, and children, all at one time pledging my health for saving their lives."

"Have you carried worse than I?"

"If you ask me the question seriously," answered the captain, "I should say there is nothing the matter with you."

"Doctors have said to the contrary."

The captain looked thoughtfully at Mr. Redway. "When doctors come to the end of their tether," said he, "they usually send their patients out of the rounds of their practice."

"I'm afraid the doctors are very far off from the true

diagnoses of things," said Mr. Redway. "I remember a drunken Irishman with his hip out, brought to the hospital where they worked at his hip with a machine amidst the curses and blessings of the drunken swab. Next morning he woke with a terrible pain in his hip, and on asking what they had been doing, was told that they had been trying to put his hip in. 'Hip in, ye villains! I was born so!' Congenital ills have often led to the murder of a man."

"Drink deep, drink deep," shouted the captain, himself turning his face into the wind's eye. "The microbe, who, like the hundred that occupy lodgings fit for ten, hates fresh air. Drink deep, but be careful how you eat; don't touch any of the ship's beef or pork; I forbid ham and tongue because you can't digest them. There is only one cow, and that's meant for the babies, so you'll get no cream until you arrive at Cape Town. But you are quite at liberty to take the steward into your confidence, and he'll make you any dishes that shall meet with the approval of the doctor."

"You are awfully good," said Mr. Redway. "My hopes enlarge when medicine is not included. It's the medicine that always seems to deepen the cough and shred my weight away by ounces and pounds."

"If ever you feel disposed for medicine," said the Captain, "ask the doctor for a ship's cigar. They pay no duty, and are fine and dry. One cigar will do you more good than the whole contents of his medicine-chest and his dangerous shelf-loads of drugs."

Here a gentleman, who was a member of the Legislative Assembly, called to the captain in a somewhat imperious way. The captain rebuked the fellow's habit of Colonial impudence by wooden disregard. He knew that the man had originally hawked Brummagem watches and trinkets fit for the ears and bosoms of servants, through

the South African Colonies, and proceeded in his conversation by asking after Mr. Montgomery.

"A fantastic gentleman," answered Mr. Redway, "who, though perfectly well, prefers to lie day and night in the open coffin called a bunk, and there to eat his breakfast and dinner."

"Oh, he'll soon come out of it," answered the captain, who then walked slowly to the person who had called him.

Mr. Redway stood holding on to the poop-rail breathing deep as the deepest breather in an orchestra, firmly convinced, as he had been told, that the bacillus usually lodges high in the apex past the point at which we ordinarily breathe, and therefore living and having its own way in a comparatively airless chamber where it multiplies. The scene he surveyed was one of a strong windy brightness touched with spaces of glory by the rolling flash of the sun, and into canvases of milder splendour by the spreading of the foam-bed into acres. There was the beauty of the crystal fountain at the bow; there was the terror of the green liquid leap as the steamer swept her forepart downwards. There was the pale lightning of the fleeting meteor in the heaping of the surge alongside, and the wake glowed silver—soft for miles astern, broken at its termination by the hazy thrashing of spray and by the dimness of spume, which obscure the clear outline of the gigantic face, through the spacious middle of which the propeller day and night was ever thrusting the ship.

It is natural to suppose that Mr. Redway felt very lonely. Mr. Montgomery he did indeed know something about, but he could call him neither acquaintance nor friend. A man who goes to sea alone, even as a first-class passenger, will at the outset find himself alone. He misses the wife he is accustomed to kiss, the children with whom he exchanges greetings; all the little comforts and conveniences, all the familiar faces and kindnesses he is in

the habit of meeting in the long day ashore, does he miss. But somehow or other, Mr. Redway did not very greatly miss his wife, nor could he find an emptiness in the thought of children, because he was never a father. In short, on the whole, he felt he was entering a life to whose freedom and privileges he had been entitled certainly not later than the first day of his marriage. He judged that intimate association hour after hour had not done his wife good, so far as her wifely bearing was concerned. She was too apt to communicate the troubles which, when analyzed, proved of her own provoking. For example, she would nag at him for having too much cold meat in the house, forgetting that he had ordered the joint by her request. He seldom answered her, but this thing happening year after year, going with the couple to the seaside or abroad and then returning with them, grew in time to resemble an embrocation which after several applications makes the flesh dread the approach of the hand He felt that sense of liberty as he stood looking at the vessel which might well come from a ship in the wide ocean, and which rises to heights of nobility in one who, being childless, views himself as a bachelor and welcomes the interference of relations that find him in excuses.

The first day passed stormily. The captain was constantly answering questions about the speed of the ship. The people who were passengers could only think of her as a condition and attribute of steam. They were not very well experienced in such shapes of ships as housed them now. To them was familiar the rig of the brig, with its yards whitened with snow-like lines of canvas, and braces leading aft, and peaks and their halliards and vangs, and all the furniture which goes to the making not only of full-rigged ships, but of ships which are scanted by a mizzen-mast. But they were helplessly ignorant of steam. Two of them had travelled by it in early

steamboats which were more primitive to an ordinary degree than the *Princess Royal*, and as they had made no particular inquiries, but had been content to remain sick throughout the passage, their interest and astonishment were as fresh as though they had been swept along by oars of an amazing manufacture, or as though an inventor had, from a car, enabled himself to sweep the balloon through the eye of the wind.

No time, however, was given to the passengers to express their various characters. Several ladies were confined to their cabins, and the nurses and children were imprisoned under deck. This was more due to the conditions of things above than to the weather. It is true, that on the third day of leaving Southampton, the master who had a reputation for shaving points and keeping coasts unreasonably near, having regard to fierce currents and the power of the inshore gale in those parallels, set his fore and main-topsail each with a reef, reefed spanker and some storm canvas forward which proved that the wind had come a little from the east of north; and the sailors amongst the crew, including the mates who had travelled these waters and knew them as people who made regular passages, were somewhat relieved to find that the captain was securing a reasonable offing.

On the afternoon of the third day, the doctor came to Mr. Redway and begged to apologize for not having kept his appointment which the captain had made for him the forenoon a day or two ago. Redway stuttered and said that he had totally forgotten the engagement.

"So much the better perhaps," said the doctor, laughing. "The captain has an excellent heart, and takes a great interest in his sick passengers. But I understand that you have seen a medical man of the highest repute in London, that he has discovered the bacillus and suggested a certain form of treatment. I should be deemed

impertinent if I added ideas, and my situation would be endangered if your condition of health proved worse if I interfered with the London doctor's advice."

Mr. Redway thanked him and said, that betwixt him and the bed-post, he had no intention of discussing the subject with the doctor. He strongly disliked the idea of physic, and agreed with a friend that the microbe might have been introduced by breathing, and not by normal generation. The treatment, therefore, was well advised, and this about amounted to the conversation on the subject between the doctor and Mr. Redway.

They were in a few days on the parallel of Corcubion Bay, which is created by the protection of Cape Finisterre and Caldebarcos Point, with small towns and villages scattered along its irregular edge. So far, they had had foul weather in plenty, the strong head wind of the Atlantic, and the crushing beating surge of that ocean. Yet, though some kept their berths, many gathered at their seats at the saloon table, and there was no prettier sight on board than to look down a little square skylight built close to the companionway, and to gaze at the children, sitting with their nurses on forms, and making hearty meals off tinned milk and bread baked for the cabin, and dishes of preserved meat. Though the passengers of the *Princess Royal* were not many, some of them, even in this day, would be called millionares, and if the produce in South Africa were not then so rich in gold and diamonds and other precious commodities as to-day, the men I have in mind, carried in their portmanteaux scrolls of engrossed paper, the loss of which would be a fortune even now. The passengers were chiefly Colonials, and their talk largely concerned South African Colonial affairs. They were tedious to listen to by persons who had no interest in the Colonies, and who felt that no good outside the boast of expansion would be derived from the annexation

of land through a war whose cost must for ages burden this country, and could never prove satisfactory as the price of soil seized from natives, some of whom roasted part of the Europeans who sought a settlement there, whilst the land decimated them with fever.

I am not exactly informed as to the number of days the *Princess Royal* had been afloat upon the sea, wrestling with tempests which should have made the most ungovernable legs easy on the wildest of leaping planks when a certain time arrived. The month of October, particularly towards the end of it, unrolls itself comparatively early in the panorama of the evening. At six o'clock the lamps were lighted fore and aft, and the side lights and masthead light were glowing; for in steam they had begun to be a little particular in the exhibition of signal lights, when in earlier times the mates and masters of many big ships were satisfied to snatch the binnacle-lamp from its fixings and flourish it over the rail.

On this particular day or evening, there rolled down on the top of the wind, which had drawn a little to east of north, a vapour that was like west-country rain—thin, muffling, and damping slowly. It brought no increase of wind with it. On the report of its existence, the captain pulled a monkey coat over his shirt-sleeves instead of the more dignified garb in which he was regularly accustomed to present himself at the dinner-table. Strange to relate, there is no such thing as an evening dinner in the old marine vocabularies; simply because the last meal of the day is invariably called supper by the sailors, and therefore, as there cannot be two dinners on one day, the last meal at sea is termed supper, and the middle meal is traditionally derided by Jack as eatables set before you by the name of dinner.

Captain Carlton quitted his cabin, walked through the saloon and gained the poop deck, the atmosphere of

which, with a single sniff, he pronounced fog without being able to see the wet. The glass in his cabin had risen; some magic hand had appeased the wrath of the sea and wind; and the hollows which had been valleys, and the peaks which had been mountains, and the shriek of the wind which might have raised at times a clear conception of the meaning of hell and its voices in the mind of the recluse or of the devotee, were fading into a peace which promised to pass into the summer of the ocean, where the flying fish leaps, where wet black flashes denote the dorsal fin of the shark, where, every day, shadows are diminished until the sun-created form of the whole ship sinks under the truck of her.

The captain stepped up to the mate on the bridge and talked to him about the fog. The mate was a man who always waited for a question to be asked before speaking.

He replied, that in his opinion, the ship's speed should be slowed.

"What was her speed last heave?" inquired the captain.

"Nine and a quarter."

"Well," said the captain, "I have often done eleven and twelve in a sailing ship in fog in an open sea."

"What sea was it, sir?"

"The South Atlantic and South Pacific."

"But here is a sea," said the mate, "washing not far off the Spanish seaboard, with much shipping no doubt in the neighbourhood, and no signals shown by them."

"If collision is in your mind," said the captain, "I am for going ahead as fast as my engines will carry me, for if at half-speed you plump into a ship, what avails her or you more than would avail you if her speed was double, say twenty?"

"I own that I have often considered," said the mate,

"that full speed is not of much use when fogs blot out the ocean. Slow down and keep your vessel under command by all means, for in fog in daylight an object you are heading into may be avoided by your being able to see the loom of it. Suppose your steamer proceeding at full speed, she would be into the object before she caught sight of it."

"Night or day, it is all one to me," said the commander. "Having laid your course, keep it, and let the signal in the engine-room be kept at 'full speed'!"

He dropt the topic as a man who does not hold the opinion of his interlocutor in great esteem, and after talking on several subjects connected with the routine of the ship, meanwhile shooting hawk's glances into the surrounding gloom, which might suffer the eye to penetrate a little more than a quarter of a mile, he went below, where he exchanged a few words with Mr. Redway.

"A bleak night, captain?"

"The shoreman defines weather as he pleases," replied the captain, laughing. "With us at sea a comfortable sailing wind called a breeze, is a storm with you ashore. There is no bad weather to the sailor at sea, unless it be the weather that wrecks him, and then a fair day may prove as foul as the belly of the Court of Bankruptcy."

Mr. Redway, without reciprocating the captain's unseemly mirth on board a steamer in a fog out at sea, steaming as he believed at full speed, entered his cabin, where he found Mr. Montgomery—who had been up during the last two days, and fallen in with the quiet discipline and characteristics of a passenger-steamer—sitting in his berth and turning over some papers by the light over the door.

"The weather proves promising," said Mr. Redway, going to his portmanteau to seek some note-paper which was stowed away in a leather desk.

"I am going to write to my uncle, and post the letter at Madeira," said Montgomery. "It's a good thing to have no relations, unless they are in a position to help you. How much trouble is saved by being free of people whom you must oblige and make sacrifices for on the merits of what they may leave you which, when the will comes to be read, may prove the value of a ring, or nothing at all."

"I am going to write to my wife," said Mr. Redway.

"Oh, a wife's a different thing," answered Mr. Montgomery. "The wife's not a relation. The clergyman makes you and her one, and you can't get away from it; and the baby arrives to make the union mystical, because the child represents you both, making one flesh and blood of two; it is a grafting, the thought of which sometimes makes me feel religious."

"I have no child," answered Mr. Redway, opening his leather case and taking out what he wanted.

"Whose thought is that life-buoy?" exclaimed Mr. Montgomery.

"My wife's."

Montgomery laughed satirically.

"What other relative," he exclaimed, "would have thought of that instrument for keeping you afloat?"

"She is the best of women, and my wife," answered Mr. Redway. "What my other relations might have done, it is no use inquiring. I did not marry them all; and the one I did is the one I am going to write to."

There was some silence, whilst Mr. Montgomery looked through the papers he held, and all human sound was stifled by the clean seething of salt, the patient groaning of timber irresistibly compelled to meet and bow the dark folds of sea which were rapidly turning into crisping light lifts of water as the thong of the wind diminished its force of whipping. Flashes as of summer lightning

gleamed from the side in the sea-glow, hurled into the dusk by the motions of the ship. In every seat, bulkhead, and in the jarring of cabin door-hooks, the pulse of the great heart, that was beating blood and life in the deeps of the vessel, reddened with sudden glares of the furnace, was to be felt. But the sensation was new to most of the passengers, and could not be understood, and the strangeness of steam was darkened and deepened to their intelligences by this hum of enginery and the blows of the propeller under water.

"It is curious how afraid women are of the sea," said Mr. Montgomery. "I doubt if women really love yachting."

"Who loves the sea as a surface, which you must travel over to get away or to return home?" answered Mr. Redway.

"I have met some enthusiastic yachtsmen in my time," said Mr. Montgomery, standing up with his papers in his hand. "Rich and fine, or comparatively poor gentlemen, who breeched their sterns and embellished their heads with costumes more suggestive of the hoary wilderness of distant oceans than the naval officer fresh from a three years' station in charge of a coast which these yachtsmen find beyond imagination, unless they own mines and estates that way, or than the grizzled merchantman who arrives wasted and weather-worn as his funnel or standing rigging."

"Yes," said Mr. Redway, who hoped Mr. Montgomery was going, as he could not write when distracted by the flittings and movements of others; "and the most nautical man I ever met was at Southsea. He owned a ten-ton cutter, and his language was so nautical that even yachtsmen could not understand him. I remember an argument—it was between this man and a plainer-dressed, quieter gentleman in whiskers, who afterwards represented

himself to me as the agent of a firm of tea-brokers. The little man shouted for a dictionary; the book was brought and the word turned up by the little yachtsman with the vehemence of a man drunk with ignorance and cocksureness. He was wrong. Much laughter issued from between a pair of whiskers. The laughter was acidulated by the merriment of others who were pleased to a man. The little fellow slapped down a ten-pound note upon the table, and swearing that the book was compiled by some fool who did not know the difference between a marline spike and a pricker, flung himself out of the room, and apparently took his departure in his yacht, for he was not again seen."

Presently Mr. Montgomery left his berth for some grog, biscuits, and the better light which the saloon-lamps yielded. Mr. Redway, making use of his sea-trunk as a table, found light enough in the lamp over the door, and sat down to write a letter to his wife. At that time, as things went, the ship was a little to the southward of Cape Finisterre, and had some distance yet to travel before she should send ashore such mails as she had for Madeira. But Mr. Redway, having little to do, thought he would begin a sort of diary letter to his wife. There would be leisure for a pleasant chat with her, and so he began by giving place and time and hour, and then he proceeded with particulars of the departure from Southampton. All that he could remember between then and now he put into his letter. He spoke of Mr. Montgomery as a man of whom he had had some previous acquaintance, and who had proved so far a very companionable associate. He tried his hand at description, and filled a page with a highly dramatic and poetic expression of the steamer labouring in the gale, the foam flung from her forefoot, the captain streaming in oilskins, and the dark mountains of the Atlantic rushing at them with the

swiftness of a railway engine which has been opened out until her race is an embodied dream of fury to people on the platform she passes. Having arrived at this point, he said that the night was advancing, and he felt tired, and would join his companion in the saloon, whither no doubt he had betaken himself to drink a night-cap or two. He then put the letter away, and quitting his cabin, found Mr. Montgomery, as he had supposed, reading some manuscripts with a glass of cold brandy and water at his elbow.

Such a saloon as this you would no longer find unless you hunt amongst the old ships, such as those of the General Steam Navigation, and the vessels which formerly made short excursions with mails and passengers from London to Continental ports. Some ladies were seated in chairs or on cushioned lockers like sofas, reading, knitting, sipping at a glass of wine. Three gentlemen and an old lady were playing whist at the end of the table. Nearly all the passengers were in the saloon, and some were in their cabins, still detained by nausea or other causes.

"What are you reading?" inquired Mr. Redway, taking his seat beside Mr. Montgomery—after a steward, as the race was then called, had been told to bring some soda and whisky.

"Oh, a friend of mine," was the answer, "who had considerable experience in farming in South Africa, gave me these folios to read. They contain some useful suggestions."

"You leave us at Cape Town, of course?"

"Yes, I get out at that place," answered Montgomery, "and trust my stay will be short, for what with the Malays on one side, the Dutch on the other, the Jews on the third side, and the nondescript mobs on the fourth side, you obtain four several conditions of filth, beastly accommodation, hotels unworthy to be called wayside

inns, equipped so infamously that even a Boer is often at a loss: if the town had found a place in Gulliver's imaginations he would have peopled it with the Yahoos."

"And I am sent there," said Mr. Redway, "that the pure air of the place and further north may destroy the tuberculosis which they tell me has got hold of my lungs!"

Montgomery looked at him thoughtfully.

"If I were you," he said after a pause, "I would regard Cape Town as a mere stage in my voyage. I should take a comfortable ship from that port to some Australian town where the temperature is equable, where the atmosphere is not vitiated by the habits, customs, and sanitary arrangements of Boers and blacks and refugee Europeans, where I should feel at home whilst I lived ashore, and which should greatly improve my chances of expelling the trouble."

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mr. Redway, after taking a drink of soda and whisky, "I wish your idea had occurred to me before. I said to my wife, when the voyage to the Cape was first suggested, that if there was any value in the proposed treatment, this trip would be too short. I remember using this image: I am asked to swallow a single pill when the efficacious treatment demands a full box."

"How about your wife?" asked Mr. Montgomery.

"Oh, a letter to her would convince her of my prudence and judgment. Besides," continued Mr. Redway, with a face of self-assertion, "it is not my wife whose health is under consideration."

"Will she be willing to suffer an indeterminable absence? You will have to take sail, and when you embark in a sailing-ship you never know when your voyage will end."

"I believe," answered Mr. Redway, "that I ought to

have taken a sailing-ship at the beginning. The voyage is pleasant. It may be cheaper; it is certainly more prolonged than steam, and I get more air than steam will supply."

Here the captain joined them, standing behind and between their chairs.

"We were just talking," said Mr. Montgomery, "of the idea of Mr. Redway extending his search for health by taking shipping at Cape Town to an Australian port, say Adelaide, for I understand that in these diseases you want dryness and coolness."

"You'll not get steam at Cape Town, sir," said the Captain. "The steamer is a rare bird at the Cape, and those that touch for coal, provisions, water, and the like, are usually on their way to the East Indies."

"I have been extolling the virtue of sail so far as I am concerned," said Mr. Redway. "I am no great lover of the sea, but, if it is going to do me good, I am willing to swallow the biggest draught of it that my stomach has room for."

"You will find some fine ships bound to the Australias," said the Captain. "I have held command in some of them. There was the *Nova Scotia* of Liverpool, a noble figure on the water; cutwater with a gentle slope just removed from a cutter bow, a tall black side with very narrow strakes, a lofty rig of white spars to the cross-trees, which spread so many thousands of feet of canvas that I shouldn't care to give you the figure, not being sure. She made swift passages; her saloon was half the length of ours, quite a pavilion of Doric pillars, curtains, looking-glasses, and paintings of other ships belonging to the same Firm. She thought nothing of twelve knots in a top-gallant breeze, but of course the ceaseless tortoise crawl of the slow steam bucket would run the question of speed out of all consideration of her. The *Nova Scotia*

was the sort of ship you should wait for at Cape Town."

Mr. Redway listened with eager attention.

"Is the time long," he asked, "in the run from Cape Town to Adelaide and back?"

"Why, you see, sir, that everything must depend upon the winds, and that is why sail is doomed for everything but timber and such ladings; and that is why, in my opinion, you'll find, ten or twenty years hence, every sailing-ship—well, I may say, most British sailing-ships—replaced by British steamers and sailing under the flag of foreign purchasers."

"Do you advocate a prolongation of my voyage now it has begun, seeing what the issue may prove? for, captain, you are an old hand, and, in one of your sort, sea-opinion is worth its weight in gold," exclaimed Mr. Redway, with the fervour of a Tupman.

"It's more a question for a doctor than a sailor," answered Captain Carlton. "But, supposing I were in your place, and home circumstances permitted, I should certainly adopt the advice of 'keep all on till you're well.'"

He left them, to converse with a grey-haired old gentleman who was straining his sight at the table over "Pendennis," the print of which was small.

Mr. Redway exclaimed, "I am as good as settled in my mind."

"Wait," answered Mr. Montgomery, "until you find out how you feel by the time we have reached Table Bay."

"Yes, I can do that."

"There must always be the consideration of the wife," said Mr. Montgomery.

"I can anticipate her wishes," answered Mr. Redway, firmly and calmly, "as though my lips were at her ear. She wants me to keep alive, and if she considers my

absence for a few months as a sacrifice on her part, she will suffer it nobly," he continued, with a lift of the corners of his mouth which indicated a cynical turn in the stream of his thoughts, "supported as she is by her victoria, a lovely old pet dog, a friend who is a famous singer and teacher, and several acquaintances with whom she drinks tea occasionally, and talks about the singing of the prima at Covent Garden!"

He rose, asked Mr. Montgomery how long he was going to be, and, finishing his glass of grog, went to his cabin and slowly turned in.

CHAPTER VI

M. LE COMTE

Mr. Redway did not immediately fall asleep. The hour was about half-past ten, the business of the ship was being carried on outside, and he could hear the tramp of feet, the occasional exclamation of an officer re-echoed by a sailor; and then again, he was not quite used to the ceaseless tremor or vibration of the revolving engines and screw.

Whilst he was still awake Mr. Montgomery entered, and the light being low, so that a man's face buried in a bunk would not express the condition of its owner, Montgomery sang out softly, "Are you awake, Redway?"

"Yes," said Mr. Redway, turning his head on his pillow.

"What's the use of going to bed to lie awake?" exclaimed Montgomery. "That's my reason for keeping below until the cabin lamps are turned down, and I never go to bed until I feel sleepy."

"How's the weather?" asked Mr. Redway.

"Black with fog, with a smooth long swell."

"And are we still going at full speed?"

"Yes. By the way, Redway, have you anything in the way of pyjamas to lend me? I want to cast these," he said, referring to those in his bed, "and the whole blooming rest lies in the bottom of my chest, and I don't want to turn the things out now."

"You'll find what you want on the right side in that portmanteau."

Montgomery opened the portmanteau, extracted the article he wanted, and began to undress.

"Your initials are not scored on then, but they cannot blunder in the washing," said he, holding them up to the lamp, which he had turned on, for passengers in those days enjoyed more liberty than is now permitted.

"I have worn those a few times when I've gone abroad," said Mr. Redway. "They are the best things to sleep in aboard ship. Some I have are new."

Mr. Montgomery undressed, put on Mr. Redway's pyjamas, and got into bed. One lay over the other, and they talked a little before the silence of sleep fell upon Mr. Redway, whose dulled snore was intimation enough to Mr. Montgomery to hold his peace.

Now this gentleman had scarcely closed his eyes in slumber when, amidst the thunder of a terrible crash forward, the ship came to a stop, followed by the crackling of broken spars and the stormy noise of foaming waters. Silence, save for those noises, lay with the weight of the fog upon that doomed vessel whilst you might have counted ten. Then terror awoke, and the black atmosphere was filled with yells and shouts and screams, and the hissing of steam, and always the thunder-making noise of rushing water, whilst the motionless fabric slowly began to heel to port; and in Mr. Redway's cabin you could hear the voice of the commander upon the bridge, shouting orders about the boats.

Mr. Redway was a man of keen apprehension. The shock of arrest had awakened him, and the sensations which that shock wrought, sprang with irresistible power within him, and leaping out of his bed, with nothing on him but pyjamas and vest, he rushed through the door on to the deck, taking no heed of his fellow-passenger, being,

in short, almost mad with the fright occasioned by the yells and distinct feeling of sinking in the planks under his feet.

There was a flame of red fire, swaying and revolving like a snake climbing a tree, rising out of the engine-room, and disclosing the ship in her integrity. Mr. Redway rushed to a crowd of people that were scrambling at a boat's falls. It could easily be seen that the funnel was gone; that the ship's forecastle remained tall and dry, whilst her stern was steadily sinking. Women holding children by the hand or to the breast, were aimlessly rushing from one group to another pleading for help, and to be told what to do. The captain could be seen on the bridge, and the mates and seamen were lowering the boats, as it was immediately understood that the ship had struck a sunken rock, the invisible peak of a mountain of the sea, whose base was some hundred fathoms deep, and that the collision-bulkhead had been swept into tatters of iron, by the weight of water which hurled aslope, gaining velocity and therefore ponderosity, flooding the engine-room, and filling the ship's afterparts, so that she was sliding and sinking by the stern, with a heel which grew more and more sharp, until it was impossible to stand without holding on.

No sea spectacle could be more horrific and sublime in all heart-subduing incidents and details of the tragedy of the sinking ship, wild with the cries of the drowning, and the groans and shouts of the people who were loading the boats, than the picture which was illuminated by the climbing and growing fires of the engine-room.

Immediately after Mr. Redway had fled from his cabin, heedful of nothing but to get into one of the boats and escape being sucked down by the ship, which he felt was foundering with the rapidity of the pulse of the wrist, Mr. Montgomery rolled out of his bunk and stood a moment listening and looking around him. He had seen

Mr. Redway fly. He guessed that he was bereft of his senses. He was certain he would not return to his cabin, that if the ship continued to sink at the rate he *felt*, the whole of them in a few minutes would be in the boats or struggling for life in the water. Therefore, reaching a conclusion with the velocity of thought, he seized Mr. Redway's life-buoy, dropped it over his head, and rushed out clear of his cabin, just as the ship, with her hold and her saloon full of water, slided down into the eternity of ooze, there to lie.

The fog-thickened atmosphere now lay with a deeper dye upon the heaving blackness of the ocean. No light anywhere! and, for some time after the ship had sunk, the impenetrable void was rendered horrible by the shouts and cries of a few swimmers struggling in their agony, of other cries which manifestly preceeded from the boats that had contrived to shove off. One of these fearful shrieks of death sank into the silence of the enormous tomb of ocean, and then nothing could be heard, nothing seen.

Of all forms of shipwreck the sudden is the worst. A big ship, filled with light, gay with the song of a singer and the melody of the accompanying piano, the picture of a comfortable and sumptuous saloon full of passengers; forward the forecastle in which the sailors are sleeping, the black shaft of chimney soaring, the yards upon the masts, ruling their support with the faint glow of rolled-up canvas, the officer walking the bridge, lower down the man at the wheel, just before the chart-house, on one of whose lockers the captain may be taking a light snooze; little children aft, drinking in softly the honey-dew draught of sleep;—this phantasmal and noble figure, girdled by a cincture of gem-like lights in the port-hole, crashes into her doom, and in a quarter of an hour the vision has disappeared, and the voice of human life is silent upon the respirations of the deep. No time is allowed you.

Your beautiful sea-home is rent to her death, and she goes to her doom taking nearly everything with her. For the iron steamer is not like the old wooden sailing-ship; when she founders all goes, saving a few persons who have contrived to edge clear in a boat or two. The wooden ship left many details of salvation behind her; the spare booms, hen-coops, perhaps the galley; whatever could be man-handled, and carried or rolled, would float for the most part; and the passengers and sailors had a chance for their lives, outside the dangerous, illusory resources supplied by a few boats, which were secured at their davits turned inboards in a manner so thorough, that many might easily suppose that they were mere ornaments and component parts, firm at the inward rail, as though rivetted as decorations.

The dawn broke; the eastern sky turned into a pale ash. Soon rose the sun and discovered the heavens covered by linked cloud, each piece of vapour bearing the solar rose upon its sun-fronting breast. Nothing was to be seen outside the barren circle of nature gilded by the morning glory wherever it could strike a glance of gold—nothing, I say, could be seen but a little play of white water like the reflection of a large planet, but broken and shivered.

When the sun was two hours in the sky the gleam of a ship's canvas broke the lens-like belt in the north-east quarter, and as she approached the neighbourhood of the place where the *Princess Royal* had foundered, the officer on the bridge caught sight of a light-coloured speck which rose and fell within about a mile and a half of the play of foam. The ship was a yacht called *La Belle Poule*, owned by the Comte Louis de la Ville. She carried an auxiliary screw, which was not then working. She was barque-rigged, and every sail was set. She slanted through the water with an airy leaning of her spars to the

genial gushing of the breeze in her canvas. She was an extremely beautiful vessel, a gay and staunch emanation of a Hampshire shipwright's yard. She was bound to Guadaloupe, and her occupants consisted of a strong crew, captain and two mates and a doctor, and the owner, M. le Comte, steward, cook, and other idlers.

The officer on the little bridge forward went to the chart-house, whence he took a telescope of considerable magnifying power for those times, and levelled it at the light-coloured speck, and what he saw so puzzled him that, after gazing intently for some minutes, he let the telescope fall from his eye and turned his head to hail the quarter-deck. But his posture of curiosity and inspection had been observed by the captain, who hailed him from the skylight which illuminated the cabin. All that was now spoken was in French, which I will render into English.

"Bridge, there! What do you see?"

"It looks to me like a small box with a ball or something of that sort fixed on the top."

The captain, who was a whiskered and bearded man with an immense chest and legs rounding abaft like cucumbers, made for the bridge and inspected the object.

After a pause he exclaimed, "It is curious enough to justify us bearing down to it for a closer look;" and he gave an order to the helmsman to starboard his helm by a spoke or two, which brought the speck on the lee bow.

Whilst this was doing, the Count appeared on deck. He rose early and was an excellent seaman, and participated in the work of the ship as though he had signed her articles as one of her crew. He was a tall, thin, gracefully built man with an aquiline nose, and an amber-coloured mustache, the extremities of which were soaped into points; his eyes were blue and keen, and though dressed in a plain suit of dark serge, he carried the dignity and presence of a courtier when Versailles was the home

of kings. He was closely attended by the doctor, a little, round rump-faced man in a suit of tweed, or cloth of that kind. Seeing the captain on the bridge, the Count went up the steps and received deferential salutations from the two already there; the doctor likewise climbed the ladder.

"What is that?" exclaimed the Count, instantly seeing the object they were bearing down to.

"It shows like a square of wood with a man's head in a hole above water."

"Good God!" cried the Count, after looking through the telescope. "The ball is certainly a man's head. What is that surface of white water?"

"It can be nothing," answered the captain, "but the play of the sea upon a rock closely fixed under water."

"That box points to a shipwreck," said the doctor.

"See if there are any boats or signs of a shipwreck round about!" exclaimed the Count to the mate.

The surface was carefully scrutinized by an eye used to the telescope and the calm or swelling plain of the sea. Nothing but that play of water and the singular object about a mile and a half to the westward of it were in sight. But by this time that which had been a speck had resolved the conundrum it submitted, and they saw the head of a man thrust through the basin-hole of some piece of ship's furniture.

"Heave to, and send a boat!" said the Count.

A boat was lowered with a good deal of the jumping, sprawling and shouting of French sailors, of which fraternity these men of the boat were excellent illustrations. They were apparelled alike, and their garb in some degree imitated the clothes of the French man-o'-war's-man. Each man's cap bore in gilt letters the name of the yacht. They wore big collars, which lay down upon their backs, and their hairy chests were concealed by a sort of worsted shirt showing flannel next the skin. Most of them had

rings in their ears. The boat splashed into the water. When all were aboard the oars began to work like a windmill. The second mate went in charge. The boat was steered directly for the man's head, whilst the barque hove aback. And then a variety of exclamations broke from the boat's crew.

The object was a large wooden washstand, which had probably supplied some sanitary need for emigrants. Through the hole in which a wash basin had been fitted, was the head of a man with his chin on the edge, his legs floating through the supports of the washstand, and his arms thrown over a rail on either side. Was he alive? A stroke of the oars brought the boat within arm's length, and then it was seen that the man rolled his eyes and tried to speak, with ghastly motions of lips, upon which you could perceive a crust of salt, whilst the hollows under the eyes were whitened by dried spray. How to get him out of it! His rigid neck seemed immovably fixed, and the second mate said that if they tried to drag him out of the washstand, whether up or down, he would rest in halves or in pieces in their hands. He therefore determined to return to the barque for a saw and hammer. With these tools short work was made of the washstand, out of which the man was lifted, and it was hard to say that he would not expire at any moment of these proceedings.

They found him a man with a beard and mustache, of the complexion of a washerwoman's hands, manifestly of some degree of social exaltation, dressed in nothing but a vest and pyjamas. They tenderly handed him into the boat, and then pulled with much flourishing of oars to the barque, noting that the man continued to keep alive by sign of lip and motion of eye. The doctor descended the vessel's side, and knelt beside the man to inspect him.

"He must be got on deck immediately," he shouted up

at the bridge, which the Count, the captain and the mate were overhanging. "See that a mattress and blankets are ready! It will be safer to hand him over the rail than to send down a whip."

This was easily done, for a ship of about three hundred and eighty tons does not exhibit much freeboard. They passed the man through the gangway, and carried him below deck to a little cabin, into whose bunk a saloon attendant was pitchforking a mattress and blankets. Then the whole familiar process of restoring people who are lifted out of the water as though dead, was gone through, and before long the patient was sleeping quietly, dry and warm, with the doctor gazing at him. The little fat medico then put his fingers to his lips, and, beckoning to a steward, bade him to noiselessly look in from time to time upon the sleeping man and report when he awoke. He had been stripped and rolled in a blanket, and the thin apparel he had floated in was carried into the saloon and the cabin door closed upon the slumberer.

"Any indications on these things," inquired the Count, "to illustrate his nationality?"

They explored the garments, but there were no initials. The simple fact is that the voyage having been hastily projected, Mr. Redway had himself purchased some pyjamas, thin vests for the voyage, airy enough for a climate in which the mosquito stings and the tarantula bites. These were packed without being marked, owing to several inopportune claims which were made upon Mrs. Redway about the time of her husband's departure, or perhaps the question of marking never occurred to either of them, or he could get them marked on board or at Cape Town. Anyhow, there lay the garments as blankly unindicative of the name or initials of their owner as though they had just been handed down by a shopkeeper from a shelf.

"I believe," said the doctor, "he is an Englishman. The one or two intelligible murmurs I caught were in that tongue."

The Count went on deck, and told the mate to send a hand aloft with a glass to the main royal yard, and thence sweep the seas for any signs of a wreck. A sailor, with a telescope slung over his back, slapped his way up the shrouds and perched on the royal yard; legs across and back against the mast, he furnished one of those memories which are recalled when other features of light and shadow, of gleaming, leaning heights, of the sparkles of copper in the water line, and the stars of the sun in the brass work and the windows, are forgotten. The barque, trimmed for the breeze, hissed quietly along the surface of the water as though her keen bow had sheared through an undulating plain of satin, and the sailor on the royal yard continued to pore upon the ocean recesses with deliberate motion of telescope, like the long hand of a clock, and the Count, the captain and mate stood upon the bridge in conversation.

"That white water," said the captain, "I have been on the look out for since daybreak. It is a terrible rock called Insua, upon which many ships have gone to pieces. You find the sailing instructions are to keep at least one degree to the westward of the rock."

"You have placed us handsomely," said the Count. "It is fully three miles distant."

The captain bowed, then casting his eyes aloft, shouted to the man to carefully inspect the white froth abeam.

"There is nothing but the white froth," came down the answer. "I have searched carefully and all around, and there is nothing in sight up here but the feather-tip of a ship's sails yonder," he added, pointing his telescope into the western sea.

"Such dangers should be beaconed," said the Count.

"In smooth water they are more deadly than when seas are running, because they make no ripple, whilst in a breeze they disclose their teeth amidst the foam they cause."

"What erected by human hands, Monsieur le Comte, could withstand the violence of the weather in these parts?"

Breakfast was now served in the cabin, and the Count, captain, and chief mate sat down to the repast, leaving the second mate to keep a look-out. The man on the royal yard had been called down, as it was manifest he could find nothing to report. From the deck a lookout was kept for floating bodies, for all were agreed that a shipwreck had occurred, and recently, to judge by the apparition of the man in the washstand. But none could tell how long before. The conversation, directed by the doctor, ran strong in the way of drowned or semi-drowned men, and the occupants of the cabin had several curious experiences which they related. The Count fell into an argument with the doctor, who denied that death was painful by drowning. He, the doctor, had conversed with several who had been rescued from death from water, and he declared that they uniformly asserted that beyond the first agony of helplessness, when the uplifted arms proved that the man was not a swimmer, the only real pang was due to causes which were not drowning. The rest was a dream and oblivion, and, like resuscitation from hanging, the torment of drowning began when the man was being rolled and compelled to breathe by artificial means, and when the dead blood was made to live and to operate in the functions of life.

"Well," said the Count, "be that as it may, such a shipwreck as that which the man in the washstand seems to suggest, is the most dreadful of all forms of marine disaster which can befall not alone the

victims of it, but the large concourse of people, relatives, friends, whose hearts as fathers, mothers, and children are with those on board. Consider the overdue ship! Here is a vessel that sailed on such and such a day. The weeks roll by; she may have been signalled two or three times; afterwards nothing more is ever heard of her. Expectation amounts to agony with those ashore who await news of her. The office of the owners is visited day after day by mothers who yearn for their sons, by wives whose support lies in their husband's labour. Still no news, and the days grow balder and balder, and though the period of despair has arrived, it has only come to take another form, namely the hope that yearns in crape, the sleep that returns the vanished in a vision, the patience of the pale mother, who again and again from the window sees the similitude of her son pass along the pavement, starts from her chair, only to fall back with a sob as she notes in the gait and build of the passer that he is not her child."

All were agreed on this point, and when breakfast was over, the Count and the captain went on deck, and the chief mate entered his cabin for a watch below in his bunk.

Shortly before twelve the doctor arrived and reported to the captain, with whom, cheroot in mouth, the Count was pacing the quarter-deck, that the man they had picked up had regained consciousness, had partaken of some nourishment, and was equal to short snatches of conversation.

"What is he?" asked the Count, throwing the end of his cheroot overboard.

"English," answered the doctor.

"What sort of person?"

"A gentleman, without doubt," was the doctor's answer. "Evidently a passenger. I have not pressed

him with questions, leaving that to you, sir, or the captain."

"Pray accompany me," said the Count to the doctor, and they entered the cabin.

We are already persuaded that the gentleman whose life was saved by a washstand was no other than our friend Mr. Alexander Beauclerk Redway. His looks were very ghastly as he lay in his bunk, and as his hair and beard were still matted he might have escaped the remark of even the shrewdest of antiquarians in pictures, that he resembled in face that unhappy King, Charles I. His lips still wore the grey of the bloodless; his cheeks had fallen in a little; his eyes had lost their wonted lustre; and yet the refinement of breeding, the airs and qualities which old blood imparts, were visible in this sufferer from the sea to an eye such as the Count's, who brought to the interpretation of breeding the penetration of a man who traced his origin beyond Jeanne D'Arc.

"I am happy," said the Count, "to have been the means of rescuing you from a slow and terrible death."

"I am not able to express the obligations I feel," answered Mr. Redway, feebly.

The doctor took the sufferer's wrist and felt his pulse whilst the Count talked.

"Can you recollect how long it is since your ship was wrecked?" asked the kindly owner of the yacht.

"No, sir. I do not know where I am."

"You are on board the French yacht *La Belle Poule*. We are from the Solent, and steered the course that miraculously brought you into sight."

"She smashed her frame against something," said Mr. Redway, "and went down like a ship's lead, and I remember nothing but her sinking, and cries and shrieks, and being in the water, and finding myself alone when the daylight came."

"What was the name of your ship?" said the Count, who, finding that Mr. Redway spoke French with more ease than he, the Count, spoke English, addressed him in French.

"The *Sandown Castle*," was the astounding answer.

"Bound to——?"

"Australia."

"Was she a big ship?"

"A great sailing-ship, and carried about a hundred emigrants, besides a large number of saloon passengers."

"Did any one escape in the boats?"

"I don't know."

"What in the name of the devil," said the doctor, "caused your captain to keep so close to the shore?"

"English navigators," exclaimed the Count, "are notorious for their love of making what they call close shaves, to save time. She should have been twenty miles to the westward, seeking the first of the North-east Trade. Pardon me, sir, but may I ask your name? I am the Count Louis de la Ville, and in this yacht I have been making a tour of Great Britain, and am now proceeding on a visit to Guadaloupe, where I have a number of relations and friends."

"My name is Beauclerk," said Mr. Redway. "Alexander Beauclerk!" and he seemed to warm up a little as he uttered this singular lie. "I have heard of M. le Comte Louis de la Ville. The name of your yacht is familiar to me. I am a descendant from the noble family of St. Albans."

"Oh," cried the Count. "I have had the honour of meeting the Duke at a London club."

Mr. Redway asked the name of the club. The Count named a swell club in Piccadilly.

"Oh yes," said Mr. Redway, with a faint smile. "I am a member of that club," and this he deliberately

stated, although he had never crossed the threshold of this particular club in all his life.

"If you are a member of the St. Albans family," said the Count, "you must have the blood royal of Great Britain in you."

"I claim Charles I. as an ancestor, through Nell Gwynne," answered Mr. Redway, looking proudly at the Count.

"Was not Nell Gwynne a pretty courtesan," inquired the doctor, "who sold oranges in the theatres and was chosen by King Charles I. as the companion of his palace?"

"Charles I.," exclaimed the Count, "was one of the finest and most moral characters in the whole list of British Princes. You are thinking, my friend, of Charles II."

"It's all the same," said the doctor, with a shrug.

"I am happy," said the Count, "in making the acquaintance and in saving the life of one so illustrious in descent as you, sir. Forgive me if I have omitted any title which you have not informed me of."

"I am plain Mr. Alexander Beauclerk, of York Manor, Wiltshire."

"And you were making a voyage?" said the Count.

"Certainly," answered Mr. Redway.

"For health?" inquired the doctor.

"Yes, sir."

"What is your complaint?" continued the doctor.

"Consumption."

"You do not look as if you had consumption," said the doctor. "I will sound you, when you are stronger."

"You have of course lost everything that you brought with you?" said the Count.

"I am afraid," answered Mr. Redway, "that I have preserved nothing but my skin. This is enough clothes

for a hot climate," he went on. "But you may have guests on board. Some ladies perhaps; and when the doctor gives me leave to go on deck, I shall feel my shortcomings."

"Don't trouble yourself about clothes," exclaimed the Count, with a grand old noblesse air. "My wardrobe is at your service."

"You are indeed good, sir," answered Mr. Redway.

"Of what height is this gentleman?" said the Count.

The doctor waited for Mr. Redway to answer. As he was silent, the doctor said—

"Your clothes will fit him."

"What did you pick me up in?" asked Mr. Redway.

"You were in a washstand, clothed in pyjamas, upon which we find no initials inscribed."

"And that is all?" exclaimed Mr. Redway, who took no notice of the matter of initials. "A man could not travel to and arrive at Australia in such a garb."

"He might claim to be travelling as a Pierrot," said the doctor, "whose white cap had blown overboard."

"I travel as a gentleman," said Mr. Redway.

"And your ship was named the *Sandown Castle?*" said the Count, inquisitively. "There will be many mourners in England. To whom did she belong?"

"To a firm in St. Mary Axe," responded Mr. Redway, who was proving himself not only an incomparable, but an extraordinarily ready liar.

"I hope," said the Count, in a note of sympathy, "that we shall shortly meet with some vessel bound to England, to whom we can signal the appalling news. At all events, to a certain extent, the truth will relieve the minds of those who had loved ones on board, and I trust, Mr. Beauclerk, that you are not one whose afflictions are to be increased by a temporary severance from those closely allied to you."

"As for that," answered Mr. Redway, "I am a bachelor, and there is no home affliction of a close character to add to the miseries of shipwreck. It is a good thing," he continued, "to be alone when you meet with a catastrophe. I was not a little cheered, as I floated in the washstand, by the reflection that there was no wife to mourn me, no children to exhibit indecent pleasure at the news, for children think of their parents chiefly as people who must soon depart this life and bequeath their possessions to them."

"It is true," said the doctor, whose wife had eloped three years before, which had determined him to banish himself from the land and its base experiences, and go to sea as a surgeon.

"We have perhaps talked enough," said the Count, kindly. "Your case is in the hands of the doctor, and I will take it upon myself to see that your requirements are supplied so far as the hospitality of this yacht is concerned."

He bowed gracefully and quitted the cabin.

CHAPTER VII

A BRITISH MERCHANTMAN

THERE can be no doubt that Mr. Redway had by shipwreck been converted into an intellectual phenomenon. When the sinking of the *Princess Royal* left him splashing inside a washstand, he was a man of integrity who had led a blameless life, who would as soon have thought of telling a lie as of lending a needy friend a spurious sovereign. It is well known that the body is animated by two sets of nerves, one to right, and one to left; that the thoughts of the left lobe of brain may be independent of the thoughts of the right lobe, so that one side of the head may be thinking one thing, whilst the other side thinks of another. I, who am writing this, make this statement out of my own experience.

In Mr. Redway's case it would seem as though the lobes had exchanged sides with confusions and errors as a result. So bisected is the nervous system that a man will perspire on the right side when the left is perfectly dry. The shock of shipwreck had manifestedly changed the nature of Mr. Redway. To call him a liar after he had been hewn clear of his washstand would be as absurd as to call a lunatic a liar because he talks of himself as the only son of the Pope. This state is better considered as a series of mental illusions perverting sane memories, which yet affirmed themselves whenever he happened to speak the truth. There are numbers of examples of this

sort of condition of mind. Impressions may be recorded or registered by the brain through the eye or ear, and stay as though chiselled after the eye or ear fails to recognize them. The experience of Dr. Rush of Philadelphia has been given. He was acquainted with a person of liberal attainments who, on recovering from a fever, was found to have lost all his acquired knowledge. One day, having been restored to health, he was seeking to master afresh the Latin grammar when, on a sudden, the whole of his lost impressions returned to his remembrance, and he found himself again complete master of what had been temporarily effaced. Cases are related of memory of old times being entirely destroyed, whilst events which have occurred subsequent to the extinction of the old memory have been as vividly impressed as though the whole of the memory of the man was healthy and complete. Dr. Carpenter gives the instance, on the testimony of Dr. Abercrombie, of a medical man who suffered an injury to the head by a fall from his horse. On recovering from insensibility, he minutely directed the affairs of his own treatment, but was found to have lost all knowledge of his possessing a wife and children, and for many days he lived absolutely unaware that he was a married man with a family. Other examples may be cited as we proceed, but they must not allow this story to wait.

Shortly after the Count had left Mr. Redway's cabin he gave directions to his valet to overhaul his wardrobe, and a suit of this benevolent man's clothes, together with the necessary underlinen, a straw hat, and a pair of shoes, were placed in readiness for Mr. Redway to put on. Mr. Redway slept soundly through the afternoon, and awoke in the evening, when the doctor found him strong enough to rise. But he was compelled against his wishes to pass the night in his cabin by the simple method of

withholding the clothes, otherwise, he felt so much stronger and better, that, had he had the means of dressing himself, he would have defied the doctor, and joined the Count at the dinner-table, where the owner of the yacht, the doctor and the captain were seated. Naturally, the conversation turned to Mr. Redway, and the gentlemen spoke low that he might not overhear them.

"If," said the Count, "he is proceeding for his health to Australia, we shall be wise in keeping a look-out for some passenger-ship bound to that country, and transfer him to her. A man who has consumption does ill in making a voyage to Guadaloupe."

"I sounded him," said the doctor, "when I last visited him. It is true I discovered a very faint murmur in the apex of the right lung, but it is scarcely to be considered. He is wise in seeking the open air. If tuberculosis exists, he will have extinguished it before his arrival in Australia."

"He seems a man of good quality in his country," said the Captain.

"A descendant of kings!" exclaimed the doctor. "And I accept his statement, not on the mere assurance of his tongue, but by the characteristics of his visage, which certainly bears a resemblance to the portraits of Charles I. which I have come across."

"A mere accident, probably," said the captain; "a question of beard and nose. You may take it that there are many Englishmen who resemble the King you speak of, who have no more affinity with him than I, whose father was a fisherman, and whose descent may be counted in three hillocks."

"He is a gentleman," said the Count.

"Unquestionably," replied the doctor.

"A gentleman," continued the Count, "whether of French or English blood, does not stand in need of a royal strain to be as proud and regal in social claim as

the monarch himself. There are some houses, both in England and France, not to name Spain, Portugal and Italy, whose records of grandeur, chivalry, distinction and historic brilliance would pale the glories of many imperial and kingly palaces."

He spoke loftily with a charming courtesy, and a sweet look of condescension.

It was fine weather all that night and in the morning, and at ten o'clock the yacht was leaning to the pressure of a light sunbright wind. She was fully clothed with sail, and ran like the shadow of a cloud over the sea. Nothing was in sight. The Count walked the white quarter-deck with the captain; the doctor was below.

"The loss of a big sailing-ship," said the captain, "seemingly full of passengers and no doubt richly freighted, will make a great stir in English shipping circles."

"No," answered the Count, "they are accustomed to losses, and the insurers welcome them as impulses to their trade, which has grown nefarious, as ships are greatly over-insured and human life and property unconsidered. The people who will mourn are those who have lost friends, and such sailors of the ship as may have escaped who will be put ashore with the entire loss of their clothes and all their little possessions."

"I have an old volume of Mitchell's Maritime List in my cabin," said the captain, "and find that it contains the name of the wrecked ship. Her tonnage is not given as more than eight hundred burthen, and her owners are named as a firm of brokers doing business in London in a street called Cornheel."

"What is the age of the book?" asked the Count.

"1851," was the answer.

"Oh, she may have changed owners over and over again since that period," exclaimed the Count, "and as

to her tonnage, few who are merely passengers by her, would know her burthen."

At that moment Mr. Redway came out of the hatch followed by the doctor. A suit of clothes which the Count had lent him was new, and fitted him very well, saving that the trousers would have harmonized better with his figure had not they been cut in the style called peg-tops which, by expanding Mr. Redway's breech and hips would have rendered his back irrecognizable by his friends. The Count's straw hat sat airily upon his head. His neck was graced by a pair of long-eared collars of the Shakespearean style and his neck-cloth was a green silk kerchief, which was kept in its place by a pin which the doctor had kindly lent him. On the whole he made a very good figure, and might easily have passed for a Frenchman, as his attire was entirely French in fashion. He lifted his hat to the Count and then to the captain with an easy grace that readily proclaimed good breeding; and if he had been King Charles I. himself, the salutation he received could not have been more respectful. A long night's sleep had restored the natural hue to his face, and nothing indicated the murderous peril he had undergone, but a little sunken darkness under the eyes and, perhaps, a lingering hollowness of fatigue and exhaustion in his cheeks.

Several civilities were exchanged, and Mr. Redway began to admire the yacht prodigiously.

"You are as smart and clean as a man-of-war," said he, smiling at the captain. "We Englishmen, as islanders, continue to accept the stupid tradition that the French do not make good sailors. But your Navy is a sufficient answer to what you liberally laugh at as a *sottise*. You have yachts which rival and sometimes excel ours. And in the records of your battles, defeats, and victories, you will find as noble a character of a sailor as we English can yield."

His friends would have listened to him with amazement, for it is a fact that Mr. Redway held the French people, whether as sailors, soldiers, or shopkeepers, in the greatest contempt, and would speak of France as a country whose sole destiny was to keep the British hand in. His speech was followed by a general bow, in which he joined.

"Have you done much in yachting?" inquired the Count.

"I once owned a very fine yawl of ninety tons called the *Imogene*," answered the sea-wrought phenomenon. "I was rather hard up at the time, and sold it to Lord Albemarle, a very good fellow, who decorated his cabin with three cups won by her after his purchase. He was so pleased that he sold her to the Prince de Luxe for fifteen hundred pounds more than he had paid for her."

"That did not show much pleasure on the part of Lord Albemarle," said the doctor, drily.

"Surely a man gets pleasure out of a sale which yields him fifteen hundred pounds profit," said Mr. Redway, whose hereditary commercial instincts began to stir in him.

"I quite understand your meaning," said the Count. "It is true—yachting is very expensive. I hope our friend did well at breakfast," he continued, addressing the doctor.

"I awoke," exclaimed Mr. Redway, "as famine-stricken as a Siberian wolf. Your coffee is excellent, M. le Comte. The making of coffee is your nation's secret, and means to remain a mystery that shall outlive the wooden walls of our country, in spite of Frenchmen and others settling amongst us. The only cup of coffee I ever enjoyed in London was at the Carlton Club, of which I am a member."

"It is a noble club, full of gentlemen," said the Count. "You are Conservative in your politics, I expect."

"I have been asked to stand for several constituencies,"

answered this prolific imaginationist. "To tell you the truth, M. le Comte, in politics I am an atheist. I own no god."

"Very well said," cried the captain. "To fasten your opinions to the judgment of a leader is like wearing coat-tails too long for you. They will trail in the mud, and your gain is dirt, which, whether termed money or position, is of the gutter, and disgraceful to a free, liberal-minded politician."

The captain having said this, strolled forward, and got upon the bridge with a telescope, with which he examined the horizon. This seemed to direct the thoughts of those on the quarter-deck into a new channel.

"As you were bound to Australia," said the Count, addressing Mr. Redway, "I see no reason why your voyage should suffer hindrance because of shipwreck. We are, as you know, bound to the island of Guadaloupe; our course, roughly speaking, is about south-west. In measuring the distance, which we shall try to cover with as little aid from steam as possible, it will be strange if we do not fall in with a passenger-ship bound to your original destination. In that case we can transfer you, as the captain would, no doubt, be glad to receive you as a passenger."

"Yes," exclaimed Mr. Redway, "that is the idea. It runs in my head. Sydney was to be my destination. But how about clothes, M. le Comte?"

"Oh, you'll find that that will easily be managed. After all," exclaimed the Count, "what are your requirements? Two suits and a few shirts, and to what you have on you are heartily welcome, if you will accept such a gift from a French nobleman to an English gentleman."

Mr. Redway looked down at the Count's peg-tops, and said—

"Forgive me if I am ungracious, but I could not suffer M. le Comte de la Ville to present me with a gift of

clothes. You will kindly suffer me, therefore, on my return to present you with an equivalent."

The Count, with a cordial wave of his hand, exclaimed, "As you wish, sir."

"My bank," continued Mr. Redway, "is Coutts'" (it was not). "It is a bank in which a great deal of property belonging to French royalty is deposited."

"I know the bank well," said the Count.

"And so do I," said the doctor, "for when I was in London, a gentleman," he said, with a significant sneer, "asked me to change a cheque upon Coutts' for twenty pounds, which I did, and when I presented the cheque at the bank I was informed that the gentleman had already overdrawn his account."

"You cannot be too careful of your society when you are in London," said Mr. Redway. "People are led away by titles, and they risk their money on the credit of a name which is very often false."

"To return to the question of clothes," said the Count, "every ship carries what is called a slop-chest, and though the contents be rough, they suffice to clothe a man; and as one who has escaped shipwreck you are sure to elude the criticism which might be provoked by a passenger who shipped in the array of the forecastle."

"Dress is nothing to me," said Redway; "I want to get well. Why couldn't I go with you to Guadaloupe, and there get an outfit and take a ship for the Australias?"

"Mr. Beauclerk," said the doctor, sternly, "you do not understand the nature of the thing you ask. Do you know the latitude of Guadaloupe? It is well within the tropics; there you will find malaria, fevers, and diseases of many sorts."

The Count slightly inclined his head, as much in acquiescence in the doctor's statements as in recognition

of the wish to get rid of a man who might suddenly become a great trouble to the doctor.

"I don't know anything about Guadaloupe," said Mr. Redway, "and certainly should not stop there long enough to become worse. But is the microbe going to increase in a week? Am I to perish of fever in the short time I require to fill a portmanteau and take a berth for the Antipodes?"

"But, Mr. Beauclerk," said the Count, "you may have to wait at Guadaloupe for a considerable period before you find a ship bound to the Pacific."

"But I can get money to put in my pocket by drawing upon my bankers," said Mr. Redway, "if I accompany you to your island. Whereas, what am I to do with a cheque drawn upon a London bank on board a ship at sea?"

"The captain," said the Count, "will accept your cheque as security."

"Yes," said Mr. Redway; "and give me the range of his slop-chest; but, sir, forgive me for saying that a man of my standing does not want to be seen by ladies, and to find himself travelling about as an ill-fitted caricature of what is termed an old salt."

"You will let us have our way, Mr. Beauclerk," said the doctor, implacably. "What we do will be for your good. I earnestly hope that we may come across an English ship bound for Australia for your sake."

"It must comfort you," said the Count, "to consider that there is no hurry. It is not as if you had a wife or children lamenting your absence or thinking you drowned."

It is strange that such a speech put point-blank should not have stirred, however faintly, memory in this man whom the horrors of shipwreck had to a large degree transformed, who could scarce open his mouth without telling

a falsehood, yet had memory enough to give names, dates, and places, which of themselves were accurate, but absurd lies in his application of them. Redway's case may be likened to several instances recorded in the medical books, as for instance: That the memory of particular classes of ideas is frequently destroyed. Thus, a case is on record of a gentleman, who, after a blow on the head, found that he had lost all his knowledge of Greek, but did not appear to have suffered in any other way. It is told of Sir Walter Scott, that after pressure of severe illness he was found to have entirely forgotten one of his best books, which he had constructed and written before he was taken ill. The affliction of Mr. Redway was one of entanglement of memory, a sort of aphasia, a blotting out into large stars or white intervals, that which should have been sequential and compact upon the chart of his mind.

"It is good," said he, in answer to the Count's remark, "to be alone in the world; that is to say, to be without any relations or connections whose tears or lamentations over your imagined loss or any other sort of calamity, would affect you with no better sense than that they were greater humbugs than you had all along believed them to be."

When this was said, the doctor went to his cabin, and Mr. Redway and the Count paced the deck in pleasant conversation. It was astounding to the Count that Mr. Beauclerk should know, more or less familiarly, nearly every great personage in England that was named. It was clear that the Count himself had mixed largely in London society, on the many occasions during which his yacht lay in the Solent. He was sought after, not only because he was a widower, but also because he was a rich man, a gentleman of ancient French breeding, a courtier and a scholar, a person capable of bestowing the title of Countess upon any ambitious young women, whether of

English or of American extraction, and, above all, an individual of great benevolence and of a most singular courtesy. But then he understood that it was enough to be a close member of the house of St. Albans, to entitle Mr. Beauclerk to the acquaintance and friendship of the first quality in our beloved Island of heavily labelled gentry. According to his own account, Mr. Beauclerk had kept his yacht, had kept a pack of hounds, had driven a coach, without putting himself to the expense and trouble of becoming a member of the Four-in-Hand. He was single, whether widower or bachelor the Count was too polite to inquire. But he was single with an estate called a Manor in England, and this expanded his social qualifications till there was scarcely a lady of any degree upon whom he could cast an amorous eye, or at least direct a matrimonial gaze, without the vein of his ideas or intentions being accepted in a most serious light.

Thus it happened that Mr. Redway had fallen into the hands of one of the very few men who, though intimately versed in English sociology, would have accepted him to the very buried hilt of his statements. It is necessary to state this in order to understand the conditions of Mr. Redway's progress as Mr. Beauclerk.

The Count was in no hurry to reach Guadaloupe. During the time that Mr. Redway stayed on board *La Belle Poule*, never once were the furnaces lighted or the propeller lowered into the water. The Count informed Mr. Redway, that apart from his object in visiting his relations, he was making this excursion as much for his health as for his pleasure, and was content to submit his yacht to the moods of the winds of heaven. The little ship's progress, therefore, was not very rapid; in fact, one day's run yielded only fifty miles, at which reckoning the Count smiled, and cried, "We are on the raft of the

Medusa!" when the captain gave him the latitude and longitude.

Certainly Mr. Redway was in luck. The Count's cook had been born a roaster, as Mr. Thackerary quotes from the "Almanac de Gotha." No man ever sent more elegant repasts from the kitchen to the saloon, than this artist. The table was always charmingly decorated. It was like sitting down to a meal in a first-class Paris hotel. The wines were excellent, and champagne was placed upon the table for Mr. Beauclerk, to whom the doctor had mentioned that wine, whilst running through a list of what was proper to eat and drink by persons menaced by tuberculosis.

Although Mr. Redway's brains had been twisted into a condition which I leave the psychologist to explain, the breeding that was in his blood seemed to have gained in point and polish by mental transformation, and the French rig-out which the Count had supplied him with did not in the smallest degree impair a behaviour of gratitude at once dignified and cordial which, to the Count, was Mr. Redway's best and highest testimony to the accuracy of his statements.

Many ships were passed steering in several directions, but no ship bound to Australia of the sort that Mr. Redway would desire, was met with. There were brigs and barques from West Indian, South American, and European ports, a couple of steamers going home to London, and the like, but nothing that responded to their wants. The Count said to Mr. Redway—

"Suppose we should fall in with a cargo-ship on her way to an Australian port, would you object to a plain cabin in her, if, indeed, she could supply you with such accommodation?"

"Monsieur le Comte," answered Mr. Redway, in a large manner which was made full-bottomed like an old

wig by the cut of his trousers, "I am not so ungracious as to say that I am anxious to cease to be a burden to you——" The Count deprecated this notion with a gesture. "But in fairness to myself," continued Mr. Redway, "and in justice to your unparalleled hospitality, I must say, that I should be grateful if you allowed me to stay with you either until we met with a ship that would serve my purpose, or until you could place me ashore at Guadaloupe."

The doctor stood near.

"I must tell you plainly, M. Beauclerk," said he, rightly interpreting the Count's significant silence, scarcely modified by the kind expression on his face, "that in seeking even a short stay within the great heat of the tropics you may be casting yourself headlong into your own destruction. It is my duty—me, a doctor of medicine—to tell you this. At Guadaloupe the microbe multiplies, the lung is swiftly hampered, and the rash patient places himself beyond the reach of science or the virtue of climates. Be advised by me, M. Beauclerk; if we do not meet with a ship bound to Australia, return to England, where you will be able to replace all that you have lost, and take an early ship for your original destination."

"Return by the first vessel that will take M. Beauclerk, you mean?" said the Count.

"Certainly," answered the doctor, "he has not the legs of the miracle; he could not walk the waters, unless in a washstand."

They all three laughed, Mr. Redway a little uneasily. It was clear even to his jungle of intellect that the Count did not for some reason or other desire a continuance of his presence on board the yacht.

"A little patience, M. le Comte," said he, "and we may encounter a ship which will save me a very great deal of expense and inconvenience."

The Count bowed, and the subject was dropped.

As if events had been contrived by Providence to compel Mr. Redway to pursue one of the most erratic careers recorded in story,—on the morning of the fifth day of his having been picked up by the yacht, the mate, who was walking the bridge with a telescope under his arm, was observed suddenly to point the glass at the sea-line on the lee-bow. The wind was light; the sea ran in long folds; the sky, beautifully painted with delicate curls of cloud, sank in a vast dome of prisms to the place at which the mate was looking. The breeze, warm with the south-east light, was a sailing wind to the yacht, clothed as she was with sun-white canvas; the ripple at the bow sang in a harp-like song; bubbles of brilliant hue, bells of foam, gushings of white water shooting in thread-like ejections of steam from the metal side, combined in a soft purring wake, short but conclusive as to the yacht's way, and proving her legs swifter than those of the object which the mate was examining. The scene was full of charm, raised to an ideal of sea-faring by the beauty and brilliance of the white heights, the decks glancing like ivory, sweet as the enamelled sward over which the pendulous boughs of summer trees sway their mystic shadows. The setting was of heaven's fairest, and added a fresh glory to the lights about the decks, and a tenderer grace to the gentle swing of the spars.

The object at which the mate was gazing and now reported, was the canvas of a full-rigged ship. The mate knew her to be a full-rigged ship, because her mizzen-royal and top-gallant sail were visible in the lenses, with stun'sails peering past the leeches of the after canvas. When this was seen, the captain of the yacht told the mate to set all stun'sails, and the speed was increased by half a knot, though 'tis true that too much canvas on a

wind, by burying the lee-side of a sailing-ship, will often stop her.

It was quite clear, in the course of an hour or two, that the ship on the bow, though tall and plentifully clad, was a slow old waggon of the deep, one of those vessels which took twelve months to get to the Antipodes and back again. In the afternoon she laid full and fair upon the sea with a spot of red at her mizzen gaff, which, when interpreted by the telescope, proved the ensign of the British Merchant Service.

"I am afraid," said the Count, who came on deck after luncheon with Mr. Redway and the doctor, "that she may not prove to be bound the way you wish to take, M. Beauclerk."

"She is English, at all events," said the doctor, "and looks a passenger-vessel, and I do not see why we should not think that she is going to Australia."

"In some respects," said Mr. Redway, who was examining the ship through the Count's telescope, a beautiful, powerful, silver-mounted instrument, with the Count's crest and name upon one of the sunbright tubes, "she resembles the *Sandown Castle;* she's at least as big, and has painted ports, and the rig is identical."

"All full-rigged ships are rigged the same," said the captain, who had left the bridge to talk about the ship with the Count.

"Some have more sails than others," said Mr. Redway.

"*Soit!*" said the captain, disdaining to argue with a landsman about nautical questions. "I fear, Monsieur le Comte, unless the breeze freshens—and I see no signs of it—that we shall not be abreast of that ship by sundown."

"In the long night she may pass away," said the Count.

"I'll take care to keep her within observation," said the captain.

"Why not set your screw moving?" inquired Mr. Redway.

The captain shook his head, and shrugged his shoulders at the Count. No good, he thought, in explaining to M. Beauclerk that the fires were not banked, and that it would take a long time to get up steam, which would be unnecessary labour and costly by usage of coal, since the ship, when reached, might refuse to receive Mr. Beauclerk or even to communicate, whilst, for all they knew, she might be bound for the East Indies.

It turned out as the Count had predicted; the sun set, and the dusk came along and swallowed up the scene whilst the ship was showing like a broad, white cloud, visionary in the starlight, far out of hail, about three points on the lee-bow. But the night was to favour the expectations which had been raised aboard the yacht. The breeze continued to blow a small air. The fine corselet of cloud had been rolled away by the draught into the eastern darkness, and the heavens were pure from line to line, exalting the apparent altitude of the familiar face of night by the glow of little stars, by the visibility of dashes of stellar light, by a numerous meteoric swarming, and by fiery gulfs into which the soul plunged itself in contemplation, as though they were the reflection of the portals of heaven, of the transcendental glory within, of Christ walking in light, and of angels winged with empearled pinions, moving and choiring amidst splendours of flowers, of gems, of pavements and halls of the diamond, magnificent and blinding to all but the spiritual eye in the blaze of glory from the Throne of God.

The captain of the yacht kept his word, and at daybreak next morning the ship was not only under observation, but within easy hail on the lee quarter of the yacht. The sun rose in a pink haze, and the undulations of the sea were beautiful with the roses and violets of the risen

beam, and the purple shadows of little clouds which moved softly under the sky from the north-east. The ship's number was flying at her gaff end, and, early as it was, figures could be seen walking leisurely upon the poop, which proved them passengers; whilst on the forecastle was a little group of seamen busy with the head-pump, and passing buckets along to the waist, where no doubt the rest of the watch were scrubbing the planks, though the tall bulwarks shut them out of sight of the yacht.

I pause a moment to describe this ship, which was typical of her times, and interesting to us as the theatre of certain extraordinary incidents. She was about thirteen hundred tons and wore a white band along her sides, broken into the aspect of the keys of a piano by black ports painted. She was uncommonly full about the bows, and any sailor could tell that she needed a gale of wind over the stern to slide a moderate quantity of speed into her keel. She was lofty, and heavily rigged with thick hemp shrouds and backstays descending to giant dead-eyes in the channels. You could see the galley-fire smoking in its chimney; bales of compressed hay were secured along the line of her rails aft; a noise of cocks and hens reached you, and as she rolled the multifarious note of spars, parrels, sheaves, rigging, suddenly strained, mingled with the lowing of a cow, floated to the ear, and she lay in the glory of the morning, a vision of the outward-bound Australian or Indian ship, whose fabric is easily within living memory, whitening the water under her with the lustres of her cloths, her royal yards in man-o'-war style close under the trucks, her long bowsprit and jibbooms lifting pearl-white triangular canvas to the mast-heads of the fore. A sketch for the pencil of a Cooke, a sight whose memory will soften the gaze of the old sailor and fill his mind with recollections of times when ships swept smokeless along the deep, storming

through it with radiant weather copper, in rainbows of jewels and diamond-flashing flakes shredded from the foam-crowned crests of dark-blue billows, splintering and shattering their curved and seething sides against the rushing mass which hurled them back with music of orchestral sail and the deep drumming of the shearing cutwater.

This was a ship that might occupy four or even five months in her outward passage, and to such slow tubs the post-office delivered its bags for Antipodean expectance. She should have flown red tape as a pennant at her masthead, and she was to help Mr. Redway's extraordinary delusions.

At once, when the day had broken and revealed that ship close within hail on the quarter, the Count, Mr. Redway, and the doctor had been called and arrived on deck; by which time the figure of a man with two or three groups of people lounging and looking at the yacht near him, broke with voice though the noises in the breadth of the sea between the two vessels and hailed thus—

"Ho! The barque ahoy! What ship are you?"

As the captain of the yacht knew but a very few words in English, the Count, who spoke our tongue, took it upon himself to reply.

"We are the yacht *La Belle Poule* from the coast of England to the Island of Guadaloupe. We wish to communicate. May we send a boat on board of you?"

The man who had shouted from the deck of the ship waved his hand in assent, and began to pace the planks with a gait of importance, which marked him the master of the vessel. The Count was wise to come to the point at once and thus save much shouting and equivocal replies founded upon mishearing and misunderstanding. He spoke to the captain; the captain shouted an order. A number of sailors came tumbling aft. They wanted the smartness of motion and attire with which a British crew on board

such a yacht as this would have supplied the eye, but all the same they were not lacking in agility, and, being attired alike, they submitted a company of brawny fellows, as lively and stout as the best of the seamen of the Latin races. They made for a long whaling-shaped boat hung high on the davits slewed inboards. They placed a crimson cushion in her stern sheets; they shipped a small staff in the bows on which they hoisted a little tricolour. They raised her out of her chocks, and when she was hanging over the side, closing the blue heave with her keel when *La Belle Poule* rolled towards the ship, eight sailors sprang into her and were lowered with bristling oars. They brought her to the gangway, and Mr. Redway, who had fled to his cabin to brush his hair with the doctor's brush, and to take a last look at himself in a long mirror in the cabin, followed the Count into the boat, and the doctor then descended. There was no need to back yards. The way of the two vessels was equal enough to keep them in close company for a longer interview than was likely to be needed. The bowman thrust off, eight oars dipped and flashed, and the handsome boat was swept seething to the ship who had hauled down her number and replaced it by the small English ensign.

CHAPTER VIII

MR. REDWAY PROCEEDS

THE ship's name was the *Crimson Banner*. On board the yacht they easily read it on the stern, coupled with the name "London." She was commanded by Captain Aaron Buzacott, who naturally inferred that people of importance were on board that beautiful barque-rigged auxiliary yacht, at whose peak the flag of France was shaking its folds. The appearance of the whaling-boat, too, with three gentlemen seated on a red cushion in the stern-sheets, pulled by eight seamen who did not feather their oars, with a little tricolour merrily flying at the bows, added to the impression of quality, wealth, and dignity inspired by the yacht, and Buzacott went down the poop ladder to the gangway to receive the foreign visitors, who might or might not be distinguished.

This captain was a small man, with a dried-out face, smooth-shaven, raked by gales and withered by sunshine, and it made you think of a dried haddock; his eyes were small, round, and black; his mouth, almost lipless, was a mere line; he had the face of an actor, and would have passed as a member of a third-rate provincial company.

Steps had been flung over, and the Count, Mr. Redway, and the doctor gained the deck. They touched their caps. Captain Buzacott saluted them with respect as his gaze went to the figure of the Count, who, with spiked mustaches and imperial, Roman nose and eagle eye, and a lofty

but courteous demeanour, looked what he was—a French gentleman of ancient and noble descent. At the brass line of rail which protected the foremost end of the poop, stood a portion of the company of passengers, ladies and gentlemen, looking down at the visitors with that profound interest which the smallest incident at sea excites in people in the bondage of an eternal liquid girdle which day after day travels with and holds them in its centre. The decks were a scene of animation, with sailors washing down and plying hose and bucket.

"I have the honour," said the Count in English, "to address the commander of this noble ship?"

"Captain Buzacott, at your service, sir," was the answer.

"May I venture to ask," continued the Count, "where you are bound to?"

Here the surgeon of the *Crimson Banner* came out of the saloon, with eyelids scarcely parted from their gum of sleep—a sandy man, coated with freckles; he stood a little apart, listening.

The mate of the vessel was at the head of the weather-poop ladder, with his hand on a backstay, and on the lee side of the poop you detected the glancing buttons of two or three midshipmen in blue cloth.

Captain Buzacott answered: "To Sydney, New South Wales."

"Ah—h—h!" cried the Count, turning a full face upon Mr. Redway; whilst the French doctor exclaimed in French—

"Did not I say it?"

"Will you step into the saloon, gentlemen, out of the way of the wet?" said Captain Buzacott.

And they all went into the cuddy, as it was then called; and amongst them was Dr. Macpherson, the surgeon of the ship. The captain requested the visitors to be seated,

and told the head steward to get coffee, biscuit, and butter.

"Our object in visiting you," said the Count, "shall be explained swiftly. I am the Count Louis de la Ville, and the owner of that yacht. Something to the westward of the rock named, in the charts, Insua, we espied what proved to be a washstand in which was a living man—this gentleman." The Count indicated Mr. Redway. "We sent a boat, and got him on board the yacht, where, under the skilful treatment of my friend, the doctor of my vessel,"—and here he flourished his hand towards that gentleman, at whom Dr. Macpherson stared as a dog at another—"he recovered. But he was in a deplorable condition. He had lost all his wardrobe by the total destruction of his ship, in which he was a saloon passenger, and which seems to have foundered, leaving nothing behind her, for the ocean was naked when we came up to the washstand."

"The Count," said Mr. Redway, "was good enough to lend me these clothes, which will account for my appearance as a foreigner, when, as a fact, I am an Englishman."

"What was the name of your ship?" inquired Captain Buzacott.

"The *Sandown Castle*."

"*Sandown Castle!*" exclaimed the captain. "If she is the vessel I am thinking of, she ought to be halfway home from Calcutta."

"The *Sandown Castle*," said Mr. Redway, "was bound from Liverpool to Sydney. She called at Southampton, where I joined her. She resembled this ship somewhat—not so big, perhaps. And she carried about twenty passengers, and, I dare say, thirty seamen. She foundered suddenly by striking a rock, and all that I can remember, afterwards, is being on board this humane gentleman's yacht."

"It is seldom that sailing-ships to Australia are bound from Liverpool and call at Southampton for passengers," said Captain Buzacott. "The *Sandown Castle* you refer to is unknown to me."

"There must be a great many ships not known to you, sir," said Mr. Redway.

"Well, that's true," answered the captain. "What is your name, sir?"

"Alexander Beauclerk."

"A descendant of your King Charles I. through Charles II. and Nell Gwynne, and a connection most intimate of the ducal house of St. Albans," said the Count, speaking with dignity, and looking with something of pride at Mr. Redway.

Captain Buzacott was impressed. Had Mr. Redway been lifted out of the washstand with this yarn in his mouth immediately after his recovery, Buzacott might have been tempted to question him critically before allowing himself to be convinced. But here was a distinguished and an opulent French Count making statements which he was not likely to affirm if he had not good reason for entertaining them.

"People of all degrees go to sea as passengers," said the little captain. "What was carrying you on the voyage in which your ship was lost?"

"A hint of phthisis," answered Mr. Redway.

"You were travelling by direction of your doctors, I presume?" said Dr. Macpherson.

"To Sydney, New South Wales," replied Mr. Redway; "and to breathe all the fresh air I can get; and the voyage cannot be too long for me."

Meanwhile, as these gentlemen conversed at the forward end of the cuddy table, passengers, but not many, flitted up and down in the bright morning light that streamed through the companion-hatch, coming and going

to their cabins, dissembling their curiosity by these alternations of behaviour. One lady seemed particularly curious, and even paused at the end of the table for two or three minutes to observe the gentlemen. She was a woman of average stature, with hair of the colour of new bronze, and large dark eyes not wanting in archness nor even the eloquent light of beauty. Her dress suggested half-mourning. Her cheeks were pale, her lips coloured as if by art; in a word, she was plump and fair, apparently about thirty-five years of age, and was easily to be conjectured a widow. Mr. Redway's eyes rested upon her while she stayed those few minutes. Her eyes also rested upon him, and the distance betwixt them was not so great but that the character of scrutiny her gaze held was as visible as the glance of a risen sunbeam swaying with the motion of the ship upon the bright brass that tipped each cabin step.

"What can I do for you, gentlemen?" said the captain.

"I should like to secure a passage on board this ship," answered Mr. Redway.

"But I understand that you have nothing but the clothes you stand up in!" exclaimed the captain. "Surely you want to ship for home, not for Australia!"

"I don't want to go home, sir," said Mr. Redway, emphatically. "As I am on the ocean, I desire to remain. I believe there are such things as slop-chests; and surely a man is at home anywhere when he can draw a cheque upon his running account at Coutts' bank for five thousand pounds."

"Coutts' bank is the best bank in London," said the Count. "You are safe, captain, in Coutts' hands."

"I wish I was in Coutts' hands," said Captain Buzacott, with a smile like stretching leather.

"What is your opinion of the gentleman's case?" said Dr. Macpherson to the French doctor.

"My friend does not speak English. I will translate," said the Count.

He was beginning, when Dr. Macpherson interrupted him by addressing the same question to the French doctor in French, as it is spoken at Peebles whence he had drawn his life, and his utterance was like the cracking of nuts of different sizes. The French doctor made answer, and the Scotchman crossed to his side and fell into a low, hideous speech with him.

"I would advise you," said Captain Buzacott to Mr. Redway, "to wait for a ship homeward bound, get a new outfit, and start afresh in some fine Blackwall liner bound to be on the list of early sailings after your arrival."

"You shall have my draft," said Mr. Redway, "for the return journey. Your slop-chest, with help, perhaps, from outside, will answer my purpose, and you will not find me troublesome as to accommodation."

The captain viewed him with a contemplative frown.

"You have a spare cabin, I hope, captain?" said the Count.

"Yes," answered Buzacott.

"You will be serving and assisting a gentleman of great social importance among your compatriots by receiving Mr. Beauclerk," said the Count, whose innocent disposition to accept Mr. Redway's statements as gospel, was supplemented and rendered invaluable to that gentleman by his desire to get rid of him.

"You will surely require your safety to be made known in England?" said Captain Buzacott.

"We can signal it to a passing homeward ship," answered Mr. Redway.

"I beg pardon," said Captain Buzacott, "but your relations will wonder that you did not seize the earliest chance of returning home and reporting yourself."

"Mr. Beauclerk does not allow his relations to trouble

him," said the Count, with a smile. "He is wise. He seeks his health, not his family. He is a bachelor, his ties are this——" He snapped his fingers. "Numerous as may be his noble relations"—here Mr. Redway nodded emphatically—"he is wisely not so concerned in the anxiety his prolonged absence may cause them as in his own health. I hope, captain, you will see no further objection. Such another opportunity as this may not again occur, and M. Beauclerk may be obliged to wait for weeks at Guadaloupe for the ship he requires, in which case," he said, with great gravity, mingled indeed with a fortifying and suffusing expression of austerity which made one think of an old feudal nobleman addressing a *villain*, "his blood would be upon our heads; for if consumption in him is now a pigmy, an enforced residence in the climate of Guadaloupe will exalt the disease to a giant's magnitude."

Captain Buzacott seemed as much impressed by the Count's advocacy of the gentleman whom he undoubtedly spoke of as one known to him prior to his shipwreck, as by his logic and the discomforting conclusions he drove home.

"I presume," he said, addressing Mr. Redway, "that you had letters of introductions to people in Sydney?"

"Really, Captain Buzacott," said Mr. Redway, with a lofty and somewhat acid look at the skipper, "close members and connections of the house of St. Albans do not stand in need of letters of introduction to English people in British Colonies."

Any one who had known Mr. Redway in Bayswater would have seen at once how it stood with the poor man, and talked of keepers instead of dukes. But he was in company that did not know him. His manners were suave, his speech cultured, his voice well-bred; Buzacott knew a gentleman by sight, as most of us do, and saw that this man was one. And then there was the Count's lofty

pleading, the apologies and commendations of the finest French gentleman, the handsomest and most distinguished the little withered skipper had ever set eyes on.

"You are probably acquainted with the governor, then?" said Captain Buzacott.

"I do not even know his name," replied Mr. Redway, folding his arms as though he considered a governor too inconsiderable to be noticeable, without introductions or previous acquaintanceship, by a member of the ducal house of St. Albans.

"What is His Excellency's name?" inquired the Count.

The captain answered the question.

"I have hunted with him," said Mr. Redway, "and if he is the man whose horse shot him into a tree, then I shall be able to recognize him on my arrival."

"Doctor!" exclaimed the captain "what is the nature of Mr. Beauclerk's malady?"

"This gentleman," answered Dr. Macpherson, meaning the French doctor, "finds it incipient phthisis. I should be unable to diagnose the disease unless I could examine the sputum. There are no means of examining sputum on board this ship."

The Count stood up. "Captain," he said, with all the blandness and courtesy at his command, "I must part from your noble vessel, and shall be glad to hear your decision."

"Mr. Beauclerk can stop," said Captain Buzacott, "and all matters of business can be settled after our arrival at Sydney."

The Count made him a low bow, and spoke in French to his doctor, who also made a low bow. Dr. Macpherson shook hands with the doctor. Mr. Redway's face beamed, but he was silent. They all went to the gangway, and one who watched the group before two of them descended into the yacht's boat alongside, one who watched from the

brass rail which was overhung by several other passengers, was the lady with the hair like new bronze. To whom a lady standing by her said—

"Is it true, Mrs. Ramsay, that that handsome gentleman in the French trousers is the sole survivor of a terrible shipwreck, and that he is an English nobleman?"

"He was shipwrecked, that's all I know," answered Mrs. Ramsay.

"He is certainly very good-looking; but his Frenchified dress spoils him."

"Did you catch the name?" asked the other.

"The steward tells me it is Beauclerk," replied Mrs. Ramsay.

"Is that a fine name? Wasn't there a King of England called Beauclerk? One forgets history so soon."

"We shall hear all about him presently," said Mrs. Ramsay, whose dark brown eyes beamed with a woman's curiosity and admiration which good looks in man, and such wealth as *La Belle Poule* signified, would excite in the sweet sex.

"M. le Comte," said Mr. Redway, speaking with his head uncovered, and extending his hand and retaining the grasp of the other, "I part from you with an emotion of gratitude, which I beg you will accept as an expression of affection, and of a loyalty eternal to your noble person, and to the memory of the Christ-like kindness received at your hands!" He spoke in French; and both doctors watched him.

Little Captain Buzacott's opinion of Mr. Redway was visibly improved by that gentleman's fluent French, as you might have seen in a curious twist of smile, which yet was not a smile, upon his dried-out face. The Count made a handsome reply. Then Mr. Redway thanked the doctor, who replied in words intelligible to Dr. Macpherson, that he had not the least doubt that the very slight symptoms

of tuberculosis would have vanished by the time that this splendid ship had arrived at her Antipodean destination.

The Count hung a minute or so by the man-rope to gaze at his yacht. It was a scene worth more than the attention of a few moments. For the day-beam was well above the horizon, though the pink splendours of sunrise lingered to right and left of the orb. Folds of light gold rolled to the yacht and the ship. The spirit and the glory of the new-born day were in each fabric, and veins of fire ruled the tarred rigging and bright masts of *La Belle Poule*; her metal sheathing reverberated the strokes of the lances of the sun as though balls of electric light were exploding along her side; she was sailing, and so was the ship, and the canvas of the yacht had been shivered from time to time to keep her in place upon the *Crimson Banner's* bow; the brim of the ocean lay melting in blue haze, and together the two vessels floated onwards, whilst the Count entered the boat and seated himself in the cushioned stern-sheets with the doctor at his side. The eight oars sank; the water in snow-like gushings of eddies fled aft from the sun-burnished blades of ash, and the boat was off with the Count and the doctor repeatedly lifting their caps towards the ship.

"Will you step this way, sir?" said Captain Buzacott to Mr. Redway, and he led the gentleman into the cuddy. They stood a moment at the end of the table where their council had been held. "These clothes," said Captain Buzacott, running his eye up and down Mr. Redway's figure, "are seemingly all you have."

"All," replied Mr. Redway, pensively; "and *they're* not mine."

"I did not quite gather how you propose to manage," said the Captain.

"Cannot I buy from your slop-chest?" inquired Mr. Redway.

"You would not wish to go dressed as a common sailor!" said the captain.

"I am really superior to dress," answered Mr. Redway, with a smile of mingled haughtiness and amusement.

The stewards were preparing the breakfast-table. The passengers in the saloon had disappeared. The captain called to the head-steward, and told him to conduct Mr. Beauclerk to a cabin which he indicated, and after breakfast to prepare it for Mr. Beauclerk's accommodation: also to overhaul the contents of the slop-chest, and place the best suit of clothes, with some under-linen in Mr. Beauclerk's berth, and to assist him in suiting himself with garments from the slop-chest. He went on deck by the road of the companion-hatch, and walked half the length of the poop to the chief officer, who was marching athwart the deck, in charge of the vessel.

The Count's boat had been hoisted: the yacht had been luffed a point or two more than the course the ship was shaping, and was already out of hail—a sweet and rosy little barque, not deformed by her thin funnel, sparks or spray spitting at her cutwater, whilst her rudder trailed a narrow delicate line of wake which glanced like mother-o'-pearl to the heave of the swell and the light of the morning.

The name of the mate of this ship was O'Gormon: needless to state his nationality. He was red-haired: the middle of his nose was indented. His eyes were of the merriest blue of his country, with a very faint squint which had not disqualified him from holding a master's certificate. Captain Buzacott, when halfway the length of the poop, called to this mate, who came to him.

"Did you know the vessel," said he, "that Mr. Beauclerk reports as foundered, the *Sandown Castle?*"

"I knew a *Sandown Castle*, sir," the mate answered. "My brother was mate of her."

"What was she?" inquired the captain.

"A composite barque of eight hundred tons built at Govan, and hailing from Liverpool."

"The *Sandown Castle I* know," said Captain Buzacott, "is the Blackwall liner that should be homeward-bound from the East Indies."

"I know her well, sir—Captain Pearson commands her," said Mr. O'Gormon, whose accent was clean cut, and scarcely tinctured by the brogue of his native country.

"Your barque was not a passenger-ship," said Captain Buzacott.

"I believe she had accommodation for a few passengers, sir," replied the mate.

"Would she call at Southampton to receive them?"

The mate could not say. He had never heard of a sailing-ship bound from Liverpool calling at Southampton for passengers.

"It seems to have happened in the case of Mr. Beauclerk," said Captain Buzacott. "And that's all his information. But what is a man half dead in a washstand to recollect, specially when he's a landsman?"

The skipper little knew how close he was to the truth when he made this remark, more out of a fit of abstraction than in colloquy. He then strained his eyes over the ship to observe her in all details of neatness which command a captain's eye, and often lead to difficulties if the officer of the watch is a sloven or a no-sailor-man. He next walked aft and went below to furbish himself up for the breakfast-table.

The summons to breakfast rang at 8.30, and the passengers hurried from the deck or from their cabins to the table, urged not so much by appetite as by curiosity. The whisper of exaggeration was about. A middle-aged lady was under the impression that the rescued gentleman was the Duke of St. Albans himself. It was generally

believed that he had a title to his name, and in some vague fashion he was confused with the French yacht, and that the Count was a relation of his by marriage. There were some fourteen or sixteen passengers with children and their nurses: but the nursery part had a place to itself in the steerage under the cuddy, and conversation was not to be interrupted by fretful cries and by the clamorous anxiety of mothers.

Mr. Redway came out of his cabin when most of the passengers were seated, and the chief steward directed him to a chair, which—whether by contrivance, for many women are strange and stealthy in their ways, and head-stewards are human beings as susceptible as the weakest of us of the influence of a crown piece—was next to the chair occupied by Mrs. Ramsay. He was still attired in the costume of the Count. The table hid his peg-tops, or Dundreary trousers, and from the waist up there was nothing in his attire to arrest an English eye. The Count's somewhat Byronic collars suited Mr. Redway's Jacobean cast of countenance. His waistcoat, which looked as though made of plush ornamented with flat gilt buttons, was the fashion amongst the nobs and snobs of English society, and was of no mean assistance to Mr. Redway as Mr. Beauclerk, for we are much and largely judged by our clothes, in a world into which we are expelled shrieking in nakedness, and the Count's waistcoat, worn by Mr. Redway, was a convincing item in the catalogue of Mr. Beauclerk's proofs of nobility to those of the passengers who omitted to remember that he had been sawn out of the washstand apparelled in pyjamas only.

Had the cuddy contained a hundred instead of a few persons, Mr. Redway would probably have looked the handsomest and most patrician-like of them all. His hair was parted down the middle in the style in which the Wotton portrait of Charles I. represents that

monarch. It did not flow low and curl as in the royal picture, but length was sufficiently suggested, because Mr. Redway had not had his hair cut since he sailed from Southampton, and he had trimmed his own beard and mustache with scissors lent to him by the Count. His face wore a grave and dignified air, inclining towards the pensive. The intellectual change that the shock of disaster, the nearness and horror of a languishing death, had wrought in him, was visible in his mild but grave expression, as though the experiences of the past, as scored or cut deep upon his mind, qualified, without expressing themselves, his own sense of the delusions to which he had surrendered himself, in which he faithfully believed with that tenacity of perverted perception which holds the madman steadfast and faithful to the mockeries of his imagination.

Every eye at that table was upon him as he took his seat besides Mrs. Ramsay. Here was an incident rarely to be paralleled in the long story of maritime disasters. A high-born gentleman, a member of a British ducal house with the blood royal in his veins, the victim of an enormous catastrophe, rescued from a situation which was not without its humorous side—apparently a friend of his preserver, a French gentleman of princely extraction!—seated at that table, to be the companion of the passengers until the ship arrived at her port! What was the interest of the ship on fire, the raft with its one dead man, the open boat with its drooping skeletons and empty breaker and locker out of which every crumb of biscuit had been scraped, the rolling thunderstorm with its ball of fire smiting into a sheer hulk the ship under the raven electric plume,—compared to the deeper human interest of the man of noble birth, plucked from the hole in a washstand, and sitting now at that table beginning his breakfast?

Mrs. Ramsay addressed him. She, after the waiter

had asked him what he would take, was the first to speak to him. She looked very well. A fair, bronze-crowned woman, plump, soft, white, with a wedding-ring discernible on a hand whose fingers, together with those of the right, were remarkable for their display of diamonds and other gems. She wore a thick gold chain round her neck—it terminated in a watch in her waistband; and at her girdle was a store of massy coins, seals, toys of the precious metal—almost enough, indeed, to have filled a tray in a jeweller's window. She turned her dark-brown eyes upon Mr. Redway, and said, in the easy note of a woman of the world, a rich woman, a woman who had dealt with a husband and buried him, childless, as an old man—

"I am trying to remember where we have met."

Mr. Redway turned his head slowly and answered, "May I beg the favour of your name, madam?"

"Mrs. Ramsay."

The passengers near enough to hear, listened, munching in silence, whilst the captain talked at the head of the table, and the mate, whose watch below had come round, talked at the foot. Mr. Redway seemed to tax his memory. He gazed earnestly into the pair of dark eyes which smiled with light and anxious amiability upon him and replied—

"I fear that I am unable to recall any acquaintance of your name."

"I feel certain," she said, "that I once met you coming downstairs at the house occupied by the Chevalier Albert Garcia."

"I must have a double," he exclaimed. "Who is the Chevalier Albert Garcia?"

"He taught me singing. He is a teacher of music," answered Mrs. Ramsay. "A square-shouldered, handsome foreigner, with a brave curling mustache, black eyebrows very thick, and eyes brilliant as sunshine in a raindrop,

and a long——what d'ye call it?" She raised her fat, white, sparkling fingers to her chin.

"Never heard of him," said Mr. Redway. "Are you a lover of music?"

"I adore it."

"I, too, am a great lover of music," said Mr. Redway. "I see that this ship carries a piano." He shot a glance at a small upright piano that was secured abaft the mizzen-mast.

"I hear that you were going to Australia for your health," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Yes, madam;" and he told her what the doctors had said.

The lady on the opposite side, who secretly held that the conversation with a salved man of quality should not be restricted to the fat, fair widow in diamonds, exclaimed—

"I am sure that you could not do better than try the Australian climate, Mr. Beauclerk. I am an Australian born and bred, and can vouch for many instances of complete cures of the malady with which your doctors have threatened you."

Mr. Redway bowed gravely in silence, and others began to talk of the healthfulness of the climate of Australia, the beauties of Sydney Bay, the commercial prospects of those surprising colonies, which the captain at the head of the table predicted would one day become a Commonwealth, independent of Great Britain, but with freedom bloodlessly obtained, therein differing from the liberty got by the United States of America.

Mrs. Ramsay listened with a half-smile, which scarcely concealed her annoyance at being interrupted in her conversation with Mr. Beauclerk. She was quick to resume, and her dark eyes and cultivated tone, and the pretty movements of her lips in speech, engrossed Mr. Redway,

who was now regarding her as a very fine woman arrayed with abundant suggestions of wealth.

"Are you an Australian, madam?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, in a low voice, for the lady over against her who had addressed Mr. Redway was listening. "I was born near Sydney, and I am going there for a change of air and the mental and physical rest you get upon the sea, and also to look after some property."

"Is your husband on board?" asked Mr. Redway, who could not certainly conjecture by the lady's attire that she was a widow.

"My husband has been dead three years," she said, in a level tone of sadness, slightly drooping her head; then, with a sudden return of briskness, she cried, "What a dreadful shipwreck you escaped from!"

"Yes," he answered. "It was dreadful."

"It seems a pity," she said, "that the washstand was not taken up out of the water for you to preserve as a relic."

"Scarcely a relic for an ancestral mansion," he replied, with a hollow haw-haw of laughter. "My house is otherwise decorated."

"But in a glass case, Mr. Beauclerk, with your arms in gilt on the top, and a white wavy scroll handsomely engrossed with the story of the washstand," said Mrs. Ramsay.

He laughed again with the note of a quarrelsome jackdaw.

"If you saw York Manor," he exclaimed, "I am sure you would be the last to suggest a washstand—a common wooden washstand—as an ornament for its walls."

"Naturally, Mr. Beauclerk, it is full of valuable old pictures?"

"It contains the Duke of Buckingham, a masterpiece of Lely, for which I have refused two thousand guineas.

I have Charles I. and Charles II., Sackville, Duke of Dorset, Felton, who stabbed Buckingham; these pictures are by unknown hands, but all of such marvellous colouring as to render them in my opinion priceless."

Mrs. Ramsey was greatly impressed. She was not much of a student of English history, and did not pause to consider that Felton had neither fame nor notoriety to explain his sitting for his portrait since he only became infamous after he had become a murderer, when no opportunity could occur to him for having his portrait painted.

"It must be delightful," said Mrs. Ramsay, with a slight sigh, "to be the possessor of real ancestral portraits. There is much fraud in this way. People buy old canvasses and hang them up as their great-great-grandmothers or fathers."

"A man," said Mr. Redway, "once pointed to a picture in his house and told me it was the portrait of the founder of his family. I did not require to look long to discover that it was a copy of a portrait of Dante."

Mrs. Ramsay's laughter brought all eyes to the couple, and the dried-up captain, addressing a lady by his side, said in a low voice, "That washstand is going to wash as a joke to the end of the voyage."

CHAPTER IX

MRS. RAMSAY

As the people finished their breakfast they left the table. The captain's chair was empty, whilst some seats remained filled. There is no ceremonial of departure from meals at sea. Mrs. Ramsay rose, and with a smile which brought blood to her cheeks and favoured her as though she had most delicately and artfully tinted the flesh, said—

"I shall look forward to the story of your shipwreck, Mr. Beauclerk. I love the sea, and its dangers fascinate me, and they are never more fascinating than when related by those who have suffered."

Her bow was graceful as she withdrew to her cabin. He rose, and his bow in return, informed by its Jacobean delusions, was so stately that you thought he needed but a cloak and a sword, and a feather projecting from a hat under his arm, to complete him as a man who, by pure force of heredity, had brought the fine airs and graces of his ancestors up to the current month.

"There can be no doubt as to his breeding," said one passenger to another, both of whom had come late to breakfast, following Mr. Redway with their gaze as he walked up to the steward, addressed him, and then vanished in his berth.

"Any actor would do it as well," was the reply.

"Why should he act?" exclaimed the first speaker.

"He has no part to play. Men don't rehearse *rôles* floating about in a washstand half dead."

"It's all rolls with such victims, I should imagine," said the other.

In about a quarter of an hour after Mr. Redway had finished his breakfast, the head-steward carried into that gentleman's berth, where he found him waiting, a liberal burden of slops, or sailor's clothes, of various sizes, including shirts and socks. They consisted of serge trousers and jackets, a couple of sailor's belts, each with a sheath for a knife, and two or three caps with naval peaks painted a light green inside, with brass buttons over each ear and a strap across the top.

The steward was a short man, with a strawberry mark on his cheek. His legs arched outwards, and, like the rounded midship section of a ship, gave stability to his sturdy little figure in all weathers as he walked round the cabin table.

"These are the clothes, sir, and if they don't fit there's more to try on. We're pretty 'andsomely found in slops; a slow ship, and some sailors do come aboard very ill found indeed; nothing but breeches and shirt, and their beddin' straw."

Mr. Redway took a jacket from him and examined it.

"What's it made of?" he asked.

"Sort of serge, sir. Better choose it large, as the first shower shrinks 'em."

"How much?" said Mr. Redway.

"Jacket and trousers fifteen bob, sir."

"Rather cheaper than I'm in the habit of paying for my clothes," said Mr. Redway, in his Beauclerk voice and with his Beauclerk look.

"Oh yes, I suppose so, sir," said the steward, grinning.

"Six guineas for a frock coat at Poole's; three guineas

for a pair of trousers stitched with silk and wash-leather pockets," said Mr. Redway, with extraordinary gravity.

"And I dare say," said the steward, who felt that he was being received into the confidence of Mr. Beauclerk, and that he was expected to talk as though he temporarily discharged the friendly duties of a valet, "that in spite of all that money, the clothes ain't secured together half as strong as these are. Silk flies; and I've knowed a man in silk-stitched breeches to stoop and his trousers to yawn, and him a sailor-man paying two pound for value not received. It was like seein' a sail go in a gale."

Mr. Redway pulled off the Count's coat to try on the jacket. He made a strange figure with his broadly-cut French peg-top trousers, and the cheap sailor's jacket, scarcely concealing the back buttons of his braces.

"A pity there's no tall glass," said he, contorting himself to catch a view of his appearance in the very small square of mirror above the washstand. "This is tight under the arms."

"I don't think a jacket so suitable to them trousers," said the steward, "as a coat after this fashion."

Mr. Redway tried on a cheap serge garment whose tails descended below the line of his hips. The coat was cut for a big man, but the sleeves were to be easily shortened by turning them up. He next tried on some trousers. He forced one leg into the first pair; it clung like a leech to him, and when the steward, like hauling upon a rope, pulled it off, the lining was left upon Mr. Redway's leg.

After three such trials he was fitted; but he repelled with a lofty motion of his hand, the steamboat cap with the green peak, which the steward extended.

"How are these trousers to be kept up?" he said.

"By one of these belts, sir," was the answer.

"And what is this meant to hold?" askedMr. Redway, pointing to the leather sheath.

"A knife, sir. There's a stock below; I'll fit one," answered the steward, as grave in this business as Mr. Redway.

"I certainly should not dream of presenting myself on deck half suffocated in a belt containing a knife," said Mr. Redway, gazing with stern dignity at the steward. "You must find me a pair of braces."

"That's to be managed, sir," answered the steward, cheerfully; "I've got a pair myself. And now as to hunderlinen, sir?"

He held up a coarse striped shirt by the arms. Mr. Redway walked round it, and then felt the texture, and asked if the slop-chest contained any vests to protect the skin against such a shirt as that. The steward answered no; what he had in that line was coarser than chafing gear. He'd inquire amongst the gentlemen-passengers whether they could accommodate Mr. Beauclerk with the loan of the article he wanted.

"I'll keep these trousers on," said Mr. Redway, "and you can leave me a couple or three pairs of those socks. The Count's coat and cap will last me for some time."

When Mr. Redway was attired for the deck it would have been difficult to determine the nature of his calling; not that his radical tokens of noble breeding were in the slightest degree affected by his garb; his face remained his face in spite of his trousers, and that he was first of all a gentleman, whatever else might follow, was as certain as that the conviction of his sea-crazed mind was that his name was Beauclerk, that he was a bachelor, that he was the owner of his very distant relative's property, York Manor, that the Duke of St. Albans was closely allied to him, and that he had the blood of the Charleses in his veins. But he looked neither fish nor flesh in his clothes, neither sailor nor landsman. He suggested rather the appearance of a man who had broken into a clothier's

shop in the night, doffed his rags for the cheapest garments he could snatch, thrust his limbs and body into them, and bolted.

He was in the act of leaving his berth when the door was hammered, and Dr. Macpherson entered.

"Well, sir," said the doctor, after glancing at Mr. Redway's legs, and then at the steward who was folding up the slops he had brought. "And how d'ye feel yourself this morning?"

"I have coughed a little, but not much," answered Mr. Redway.

"I should like to sound you," said the doctor, pulling out his stethoscope.

Mr. Redway's bosom was bared, and the doctor leaned a heavy red head against the tube. The bulkheads creaked and the doctor listened. He withdrew his tube and said—

"You state that the germ of tuberculosis has been found in your lung; that ample clinical evidence of incipient phthisis was forthcoming at some date; and in connection with this, and unmistakeably clear, were the apical rales. This, I believe, was the substance of your statement, Mr. Beauclerk?"

"I don't know what you mean, sir," answered Mr. Redway, in a large manner.

"Well, sir," said the doctor, "for my part I can hear nothing. My hearing and my experience are equally cute, and I'm prepared to wager fifty guineas, though a poor man, that there's not a doctor in existence, unless he's a quack who trades upon the fears which he excites, who shall swear on the Bible, or affirm as a gentleman and an honourable man, that he can detect by the stethoscope the least appreciable hint of lung trouble."

"I consider your remarks very satisfactory," said Mr. Redway.

There was nothing in Dr. Macpherson's expression of

face to hint that he entertained the slightest suspicion that the gentleman who was standing before him was afflicted mentally by shipwreck. His eye wandered loose, as in one who talks with thought and regards the situation of the moment as real and true.

"You will, I suppose," he said, "be anxious to communicate the news of your salvation to your friends at home. And therefore, sir, I think you cannot do better than prepare a letter, so that, should we speak a homeward-bound ship, no delay need arise in sending it on board of her."

"There is really nobody," said Mr. Redway, "with whom I particularly care to communicate. The news will be made known in good time. It's impossible for you to burden me with relatives whose concern justifies me in troubling myself with writing. All know that I have sailed for Australia, to get rid of what you say does not exist. When the news of the loss of the *Sandown Castle* reaches England, it will remain a conjecture whether I foundered with her or was picked up. Let this conjecture stand. It is interesting, and it amuses me to reflect that several of my friends—persons who have borrowed money from me, individuals who have partaken of my hospitality, and a certain cousin, to whose name is prefixed the word Honourable, and who, if I do not marry and get an heir, will inherit York Manor—will be pleased to conceive me as resting peacefully on the ooze."

"Ah, sir, you take Timon's views of life. 'Tis the dish of hot water to the hungry, and the cry of 'lap, dogs!'" exclaimed the doctor, with a slow screwed-up smile, which diminished the size of his eyes and made the general effect of his face more scarlet than usual by the queer compression of lineaments.

"How about paying for this toggery?" said Mr. Redway.

"That question does not come within my duties to answer. You will please speak to the captain," answered the doctor, who opened the door much puzzled by the sour nonchalance of Mr. Beauclerk's reference to his relations, but absolutely unsuspicious of the real state of his mind.

What was to give him a clue? Mr. Redway's truthful impressions and recollections, which were visible in his speech, as the partially preserved outlines of shapes and forms are discernible amid the damp dimness of the walls of a crypt, were, by the phenomenal skill and cunning of a brain in part distraught, combining its delusions with what was real in memory, rendered sane even to a listener who, like Dr. Macpherson, was not wholly unversed in mental physiology, though in those days many ship's surgeons were better acquainted with the nature of strong waters than the human character in its submissions to the operations of the brain.

The doctor went to his cabin, and Mr. Redway passed through the companion on to the poop. The picture was the glory and the freshness of the sea, lighted by the flaming sun, brushed into lines of foam, which ran with the tinkling of cymbals before the glad and mellow gushing of the breeze. The yacht was a square of pearl, hovering on the verge of the south-western sea-line. Aloft rose the clouds of the ship's canvas, sail upon sail twinkling with hurrying fingers of violet shadow, lustrous as spaces of sun-touched ice where the leeches were taut and the cloths plump and stirless. But you did not need to hang very long over the ship's side to determine that she was an uncommonly slow waggon, staunch, frigate-like, and stately as she was. A sulky sob rose with each beat of the bows. The swift music of the clipper-stem was not to be heard. The white water floated slowly past, and the tail of the wake fell within the cast of a spear. Such

were the ships in which our fathers travelled, forty, fifty and sixty years ago. It needed Job to navigate them, and his comforters to encourage him.

Mr. Redway, with braces borrowed from the steward, on gaining the deck, gazed around him as though at a loss. The captain was walking on the weather side, near the wheel. Some of the passengers were seated here and there reading or knitting, and a few children played about their knees. Smoking was not allowed in daylight on the poop, and several male passengers might, by your looking down on the quarter-deck over the brass rail, be seen puffing their after-breakfast pipes with the intense relish of the palate in the taste of tobacco at sea, on a fine sunny morning, when the ship streams through the water and the wind is fresh and sweet. Mr. Redway's eyes were promptly fixed on Mrs. Ramsay, who occupied, in languid posture of musing, reverie and placid enjoyment of the bright morning, half filled to her lifted gaze by the mountainous spaces of the ship's sails, a velvet-cushioned deck chair, which, by modest extension of form and limb, exhibited the graces of her person to the exposure of a pair of small feet, shod by the best of Parisian shoemakers; her hair was protected by a hat of Tuscan straw, which drooped a little over the brow and over the back of the head. The black of the large feather that was curled round it, charmingly contrasted with the colour of her hair, the abundance of which, as a genuine product of her own growth, the gaze dwelt on with an agreeable sense of nature in the beauty it admired.

Whilst Mr. Redway stood for a few moments as though perplexed, Mrs. Ramsay brought her dark eyes from aloft, and seeing the noble Mr. Beauclerk standing at the companion, nodded gracefully with an air of acquaintanceship, and called to him: "Is this ship finer than the ship that wrecked you?"

Mr. Redway was about to step across to Mrs. Ramsay's chair to answer her question, when the captain, whose pacing had brought him abreast of the companion, exclaimed—

Will you kindly come to this side of the deck for a few moments?"

Mr. Redway raised his cap to the lady with the dignity of a Spanish nobleman, and a motion of the left hand that was readily interpretable as an apology for not instantly joining her, and crossed to the side of the captain, who walked him aft.

"I see, sir," said the little skipper, viewing Mr. Redway's legs, "that you have made your choice from the slop-chest."

"The steward brought me some clothes," answered Mr. Redway; "but they are shockingly coarse. The shirts are fit for priests to wear as penances, and the socks make every allowance for the rheumatism which, I believe, distorts the toes of sailors."

"Coarse, but cheap, sir," exclaimed the captain; "I've worn those trousers myself."

"These!" half shouted Mr. Redway, with a start.

"The like of them, sir."

"Shall I write you a draft upon Coutts' bank for the cost of the articles I have selected?" said Mr. Redway. "A sheet of paper and a penny stamp will serve as a cheque."

"We will wait for a settlement until our arrival," said the captain. "Do you know the difference between a ship and a barque?"

"This is a ship," said Mr. Redway, looking up at the mizzen topsail.

"Pray, Mr. Beauclerk," continued the captain, "what was the name of the master of the *Sandown Castle?*"

"Walker," was the reply of the man who, before he

was sawn out of a washstand, was exemplary for the truthfulness of his speech and the honourable simplicity of his life.

"And the vessel was a ship," said the captain, knitting his brow in puzzlement, for the readiness of Mr. Beauclerk's answers rendered his statements more convincing than perhaps had he spoken the truth.

"Much like this," answered Mr. Redway.

"I have looked through the 'Maritime Register,'" said the captain, "and find that the only full-rigged ship named in the list is the *Sandown Castle*, a Blackwall liner, at present homeward-bound from Calcutta."

"What's that to me?" exclaimed Mr. Redway, with a snap of his fingers. "If you doubt my word——" he looked a little fierce, and the faltering lift of his hand seemed to indicate a disposition to extract something from behind his waistcoat.

Now this man was Mr. Beauclerk; his statements had been verified by a French Count of noble blood. He was connected with a great ducal house, and the circumstance of his possessing an ancestral manor in England was sufficient proof that he was a man of property. To quarrel with this gentleman whom he had humanely rescued would have been absurdly impolitic on the part of a captain who, like most of his brethren who navigated passengers to foreign ports, was professionally dependent upon the good words, the grateful wishes, embodied often in claret jugs, purses, or pieces of plate, of the people who made the voyage.

"I have no reason whatever for doubting your word," said the captain; "but landsmen frequently make mistakes when they talk about the sea, and there are a good many who don't know the difference between a barque and a ship."

"Considering that I was once induced to invest five

hundred pounds in a barque in the Guano Trade," said Mr. Redway, "you will admit perhaps that I am not so ignorant of the distinction you refer to as you choose to believe."

This, like most of his statements, was a cunning lie, and the captain believed it to be true. But it was a lie that could not injure, and was free from malice. It was not the lie of the prospectus bearing the names of men who, unlike Mr. Redway, are really noble in descent. It was not the lie of the critic who in spite decries, or who for a meal will represent you as a genius. It was not the lie of the racecourse; of the writers of volumes relating to living people.

"It is impossible," continued Mr. Redway, "for any man to know the names of all the ships owned in Great Britain."

"You'll find a full list in Mitchell's 'Maritime Registry' —name, where built, tonnage, owners, and the rest of it," said the captain.

Mr. Redway smiled with an expression of haughtiness in his look of pity.

"No man ever compiled a book," he exclaimed with vehemence, "that was free from errors of omission and blunders in data."

The captain gave him a bow. He did not wish to lose his temper with this dignified gentleman, who was slightly exasperating in his suggestions of condescension and in the cocksureness of what was little else than blunt contradictions, and saying, "I will leave you to join Mrs. Ramsay," he walked to the binnacle and looked at the compass, severely eyeing the figure of the Duke of St. Albans' relative as he approached Mrs. Ramsay, somewhat tight about the legs in his lined small-clothes, and singular from his breech upwards by virtue of the French cut of the Count's coat. All the people on the poop regarded

him with natural interest and attention. Even a common shipwrecked sailor with plastered hair, naked mossy bosom, arms embellished with the pricking needles of the tattoo, by portraits of the Virgin Mary, mermaids, bracelets, and sailors backed by the red glare of the commercial ensign, picked off a raft or hoisted on board with hanging head and hanging feet, limp as a wet swab thrown over a rail, would excite much musing, contemplation, commiseration, amongst passengers who are already weary of the sea, and to whom such an incident as a steward falling down with a basket of crockery, will furnish mirth and talk until bed-time. How much more engrossing, then, the wonder and excitement raised by the apparition of such a victim of salt water as Mr. Beauclerk, who, for all the passengers knew, was on friendly terms with the Royal Family, a member of clubs which takes years to enter, a friend of some of the highest quality in the land which was over the stern? He was, indeed, a direct appeal to the Colonial instinct; for the British Colonial, like the American, whose affirmations as to the equality of mankind grow more nasal in proportion to his distance from his native land, dearly loves a lord, as Byron said of Tom Moore.

Amongst those who stared hardest at Mr. Beauclerk was Mrs. Mowbray, the Australian lady who had addressed him at the breakfast-table. Her eyes continued to rest upon him, and then upon Mrs. Ramsay, when they were together, though she was ready to dodge detection by keeping an open volume on her knees.

"Will you take my chair to that skylight or to that hencoop, as I shall not otherwise be able to find a seat for you?" said Mrs. Ramsay.

She rose. No awning was as yet spread; the sun was still too far south to dart its tropical sting to the parallel which the *Crimson Banner* had cut, and Mrs. Ramsay, who had been seated in the shadow of one of those wings

called stay-sails, curving betwixt the mizzen-mast and the main mast, opened a black and white parasol, and followed Mr. Beauclerk as he dragged her chair to a hencoop abreast of the port after-quarter boat. The top of the hencoop was painted white. Mr. Redway produced a red pocket handkerchief, one of the Count's loans, and spread it with some idea of protecting his slops from the dust of the paint, and sat down, whilst Mrs. Ramsay adjusted herself in her deck-chair with all the grace which a plump shapely figure, small well-shod feet, very pretty hat, hair that takes the glint of the light like a five-pound piece of gold, an agreeable smile and good teeth, can inform the shape and postures of a woman.

"It is wonderful," said she, "how easily you have mastered the shock which your shipwreck must have caused you. I wonder what *I* should have done! I should have died. How dreadful to be floating about with one's chin on a level with the sea!"

"I have been in so many situations of danger," replied Mr. Redway, "that I felt no fear, and then my senses left me."

Now it is questionable whether this man, until the *Princess Royal* sank under him, had ever been in a situation of danger in his life.

"It is extraordinary," said she, fixing upon him her dark eyes brim full of the light of her intelligence and the splendour of the sun in the atmosphere, "that you should so closely resemble the gentleman I once met descending the stairs at the Chevalier Garcia's."

"The person, whoever it was, seems to have impressed your memory," he replied.

"Well, Mr. Beauclerk," she exclaimed, "only a few days before, I had visited Westminster Abbey, and was taken by one of the Canons to view the wax images, and I was struck by a certain family resemblance between the

waxen face of King Charles II. and the face of the person I met on the Chevalier Garcia's staircase."

"I am generally supposed to carry in my face a strong likeness to Charles I., and I do not know that Charles II. resembled his father. But one would scarcely suppose that a man dressed as I am would have the blood of kings in his veins."

"You are picturesque, Mr. Beauclerk," said the lady, with an insinuating smile. "You are voyaging to a country which is full of romantically clad people. Your clothes make you as interesting as an Australian stockman."

"How is he dressed?" asked Mr. Redway.

"Usually in a weather-stained cabbage hat, a tweed jacket, woollen trousers strapped down the legs with leather—and he wears heavy spurs."

"I would rather be dressed like that than like this," said Mr. Redway. "I am a sight; I know it. There are no tailors' shops on board ship. I am obliged to clothe myself with the rubbish that is supplied by rapacious owners to sailors who, I understand, are the most easily cheated of all the communities in this world. They are a prey to the Chinaman and the Hindoo; the savages of South Africa rob them. By the dwellers on the Mediterranean coast they are drugged and stripped; they find horrible enemies in the crimps, who feign to be their friends. But the deadliest of their foes are the shipowners, who put such clothes as I am compelled to wear on board ship for their use."

"My heart bleeds for sailors," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Who is that lady with a book upon her knee?"

"A Mrs. Mowbray."

"She stares without much taste."

"I am sorry to say," said Mrs. Ramsay, "that she is Australian."

"Is she disagreeable?"

"I was slightly acquainted with her before we met on board this ship," answered Mrs. Ramsay. "We did not visit; we merely bowed. She is disposed to be sarcastic and somewhat cantankerous, and if she should prove communicative to you, Mr. Beauclerk, you will put her down as an idle gossip whom even the life of a ship and the unconventional enjoyment you get from the ocean cannot reclaim from the one unfortunate tendency of our sex."

"Which is what?" asked Mr. Redway, with a grave smile.

"The love of scandal," she answered, with a light shake of the head, and a smile that brightened her face like a gleam falling upon a woman's charms from betwixt the waving boughs of a tree.

"I abhor a scandalous tongue," said Mr. Redway, sending a stern glance at Mrs. Mowbray, whose eyes instantly fell upon the open page of her book. "It was in my power once to have raised a scandal that would have convulsed London society."

Mrs. Ramsay's interest was immediately impassioned.

"I was walking in Piccadilly when, chancing to put my hand in my pocket, I found a purse which did not belong to me. It contained a diamond of value wrapped in tissue paper, four five-pound notes, and a cocked-hat letter of love from the French ambassador, making an appointment with a certain countess, whose purity of morals as a wife and devotion as a mother had been frequently praised in my presence."

"How extraordinary!" cried Mrs. Ramsay.

"I did not know what to do," continued the egregious liar, whose sanity of imagination and grave and serene utterance of falsehood would have justified his instant withdrawal from any lunatic asylum he had been immured in. "If I handed the purse to the police, the scandal would

be in the newspapers next day. If I privately communicated with the countess, whose husband was a member of one of my clubs, and perfectly well known to me, the result might have proved extremely disagreeable to myself as well as the earl, who, though a libertine, is horribly jealous of his wife, and, instead of attacking the French ambassador, he might have sent me a challenge for not handing the purse over to him."

"You would have fought him?" said Mrs. Ramsay, with a countenance of absorbed interest in the narrative.

"God has granted us only one life," answered Mr. Redway, "and I certainly should have declined to forfeit what I have nearly lost in a washstand by slaughtering the earl on the sands of Calais or Boulogne merely because his wife, in whom I was not in the slightest degree interested, chose to make a fool of herself with the French ambassador."

"How did that purse get into your pocket?" asked Mrs. Ramsay.

"Oh," he answered, "I have always supposed that the pickpocket who robbed the countess, finding himself detected, slipped the purse into my pocket, and bolted. Who is that gentleman talking to Mrs. Mowbray?"

He referred to a tall, pale, thin man with long hair and long feet, spectacles, and a goatee or rope's-end of beard dangling at his chin. He wore straps to his trousers, and white gaiters, and a hat such as may sometimes be seen on the heads of English farmers and gentleman of a turfy cut.

"He is a Mr. Harold Jansen," replied Mrs. Ramsay.

"A Scandinavian?"

"No doubt," answered the lady. "But he is naturalized as an Englishman, I've heard;" which was true, for Jansen was one of those foreigners who talk English with a rippling, dribbling accent that reminds you of the

bubbling at the breast of a swan stemming a stream; he was a man to boast of England as though he had been one of those British admirals or generals who write to the newspapers on the subject of the country, its navy and army; a hunter and foot-kisser of the British nobleman, a man who talked loud and often in opinion, and who would say when one of our little wars was on, 'Ve shall smash them yet!'"

"Is he a gentleman?" asked Mr. Redway.

"He says he can mesmerize people, tell their fortunes, make them predict under the influence of his eye, and may prove entertaining by representing the character of a fraudulent fool," answered Mrs. Ramsay. "That is all I have heard of him. Don't allow him to trouble you with his nonsense;" and she gazed softly at the unfortunate liar whose wife at home might by this time be thinking he was lying at the bottom of the sea. I say she gazed softly, as though an intimacy were already established; her eyes suggested the expression of approbation which a woman's eyes will take when she believes her foot is on the first step of the throne of a man's sensibilities and feelings.

Distraught as he was by too much salt water, curdled and functionally impaired as was a considerable proportion of his brains by an appalling stroke of disaster, he seemed to understand the meaning in her eyes, to judge from his answer—

"I shall be delighted to entrust my safeguarding to your hands."

She slightly coloured, smiled, and inclined her head in silence.

Thus at a very early period do we catch hold of one thread of a singularly tangled skein. Meanwhile, over the way, out of earshot, with the blue line of ocean working like a see-saw above the rail leagues beyond the

outline of the low-crowned hat on Jansen's head, the naturalized Englishman and Mrs. Mowbray, the one standing, the other seated, were deep in talk, neither looking at the subject of their conversation.

"I've had nothing to say to him," said Mrs. Mowbray, always in soft whisper. "But he has let fall a great deal that doesn't sound very well in *his* mouth, anyway."

"He brags, you think?" said Mr. Jansen.

"Mesmerize him," said the lady, "and I suspect his visions will prove less populous with noblemen than he should wish us to imagine."

"They seem great friends very soon," said Mr. Jansen, whose peculiar accent is not communicable in print.

"What will the gentleman of royal descent think," said Mrs. Mowbray, with an unpleasant, sarcastic smile, "if he should happen—by accident, you know—to find out that the charming widow is the daughter of a convict?"

"Is that so?" exclaimed Mr. Jansen. "But a convict! There were so many kinds in that day. The political convict is a man sometimes to be honoured."

"And the man who robs!" said Mrs. Mowbray, with slight contraction of brow.

"Ach!" replied Mr. Jansen, shrugging his shoulders. "My Cot, what a slow ship this is!" and he stole aft to talk to the captain.

CHAPTER X

FIDDLE-DE-DEE

Mrs. Mowbray's references to Mrs. Ramsay's antecedents was a hard saying in the mouth of a woman whose grandmother had been a cook, and whose father had made a little fortune as a confectioner, and had therefore been able to give her a finishing education. Society in Sydney in the days I am dealing with was composed, as in English, and indeed, most European towns, of parties and cliques; with this difference, that it included an element or an infusion of convicts or ticket-of-leave men, politely spoken of as "prisoners of the Crown," or as "old hands," or as "government men," or as men who had been "sent out." This language might have soothed the feelings and sensibilities of the expatriated, but it did not in the least degree improve their social chances. They made fortunes; they drove about in handsome equipages; they lived in fine houses, and employed numerous servants, and owned vast areas of land; but, like the Jews, they were forced into a state of gregariousness; they were compelled by a species of ostracism, dumb but remorseless, to herd together, and the efforts of the most impudent to break by weight of wealth through the social barrier was as hopeless as the struggles of a child to pluck the moon from the heavens.

Nevertheless, it was extremely unkind and even wicked on the part of Mrs. Mowbray to lift the tombstone under

which the remains of Mrs. Ramsay's paternal history lay coffined and dead as dust in the judgment of any society that was not Antipodean.

I have said that the *Crimson Banner* was a proverbially slow ship of those days, though popular by virtue of the reputation of her little withered commander as an extremely cautious, prudent, and safe navigator. Which makes this anecdote as apropos as 'tis true: that a number of captains drinking, smoking, and yarning in a small hotel at Deal, one of them on a sudden jumped up and swore like another Vanderdecken, that he would defy the breeze which was yoking his schooner with thongs of the atmosphere to the ooze of the Downs; and going on board, he ordered his men to get the anchor, and making sail, went away on one of those taut luffs which incurve half your fore and aft canvas, and so beating from French coast to English coast, he thrashed with coppered forefoot through the rolling hurdles of foaming ridges, and gained the Azores, where he filled his hold with fruit, and then came home before a fresh north-westerly gale; and as his little clipper swept like the shadow of a cloud through the Downs he found every sailing vessel he had left still at anchor, and there is good reason to suppose the captains whose company he had abruptly quitted were still congregated in the smoking-room of the Deal hotel, smoking, yarning, and waiting for the wind to shift.

Captain Buzacott might have been one of those men. He was never in a hurry; his aspirations rose no higher than safety, which was commonly topped by a liberal gift from the passengers, and if his round bows occupied even five months in driving a furrow through the wide and mighty fields of the ocean, he was content; his passengers were content, and nobody had much to say about it but the people in Sydney and outside of Sydney, who were expecting letters by his ship.

The *Crimson Banner* struck the North-east Trades. She foamed in the sturdy revelry of the sea, and with widespread wings of stun'sail, and canvas swelling like the sides of a balloon, she whitened the water like an old line-of-battle ship, and thundered onwards at about half the speed of a clipper vessel. But the sense of motion was gratified and satisfied by the tumbling, curving glory of salt water alongside and astern. She was sailing. Australia was every hour growing closer by knots. She spat the flying fish from her stem. The dolphin was under the shadow of her bowsprit. The swallow of the deep pursued her ; and aboard all was moon-white plank, the corruscation of brasswork hove to the sun, the pendulum swing of the shadows of rigging, and, under the awning aft, ladies and gentlemen sitting or in motion; Jack with rippling breeches aloft, or busy on deck ; and so the *Crimson Banner* went heading to hit the Roccas, which are off the coast of Brazil, for navigation was a disease rather than an art in the head of the little governor of that floating jail, who came and went, carrying always the twisted, dried-up face of the low comedian, looking as often to leeward as to windward, and just as often also at the canvas.

One wants to know, at this juncture, whether Mr. Redway still imagined himself the owner of his distant relative's possessions, whether he continued in partial ignorance of his life, which comprised a wife, prior to the subsidence of certain of his most important functions, through the hole in which he had lodged his head in the washstand. For if he is to remain an unscrupulous liar, aping sanity with the genius of some marvellous actor, then our medical friends will insist that paralysis must either destroy him or bring his grave within a few weeks of him ere the *Crimson Banner* should have Agulhas fair on the port bow. We shall see.

This condition has to be gravely considered. Mr. Redway was not mad; he was functionally disordered. If there are cells in the brain in which ideas lodge themselves, as the butterfly secretes its white or damask wings in the husk or cocoon of the chrysalis, then it may truly be inferred that the frightful shock of shipwreck had, as by intellectual impact or collision, so disordered the contents of Mr. Redway's brains that most of his ideas found cerebral asylums in the wrong places. This would still leave him in a state fit to be visited by gleams of common-sense, and certainly, as we have seen, the map of his memory was not totally obscured. His was perhaps the case of a certain lunatic, who was a patient in a Scotch pauper lunatic asylum. He conceived himself a king, and his state one of regal splendour. Nevertheless, he could not understand why all his food tasted of oatmeal.

Many of Mr. Redway's ideas were based on perception; many on imagination extraordinarily perverted. Memory had suffered alarmingly in various vital points, but was still so potent a factor as to utterly mislead and hold unsuspicious the people with whom he was associated.

One evening, not many days after the date of the rescue of Mr. Redway, a full moon rose, and its white splendour came along with the North-east Trade, and every head of surge was a line of pearl. Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway stood watching at the ship's side the most tender, the most romantic, the most moving of all God's revelations of Himself, in celestial sweetness and mild and solemn face of heavenly love, which the eye can behold as it sweeps through the deep. The star-bright clouds of the commercial gale rose in flight of flocks, and widened their processions as they flew into the violent depths of the south-western recesses where the stars were shining, undimmed as yet by the satellite whose spiritual influences are poetry, music, and madness.

The little commander paced the weather side of the deck. Most of the passengers were present, surveying the glorious picture of early night, clad not only with the beauty of moon-rise and star-shine, but by the splendour of rushing seas and the soft climbing of rounded and whitened canvas to the moon-tinctured trucks which swayed in stately motion under the flight of the scattering meteors. Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer talked scandal about Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway. They were seated on a skylight bench, and thought not of the moon, nor did they cast their eyes in search of beauty anywhere; but they looked at each other and found more delight in their topic than they would have got from heaven itself had it opened above the mastheads.

Mrs. Latimer was the wife of Captain Latimer, and was proceeding to Australia to join her husband. The rest of the people seemed to be enjoying the night. Mr. Jansen walked the deck with Dr. Macpherson, and two or three gentlemen were sucking pipes on the quarter-deck which, in a ship with a poop, extends from the cuddy-front to the after-coaming of the main-hatch.

"Such a night as this," said Mrs. Ramsay, "really deserves to be greeted with music."

Each dark eye of hers held a silver star. At no time, and in no place are the soft dark eyes of a woman more lovely than in moonlight. The pencil of the moonbeam gives precisely those touches which pre-eminently embellish faces such as Mrs. Ramsay's, and nobody could have told her that truth as something new to her. If Mr. Redway by her side, did not look exactly kingly, he felt so; and this, in spite of his garb which was an irritating condition of his shipboard life. He was disgusted with the sailor's trousers, and some derisive remarks which had been let fall by two or three male passengers concerning French fashions in coats and breeches, had excited a loathing in

him for the Count's peg-tops. But needs must when old Nick drives. The only passenger on board who had offered, not indeed to lend, but to give him a pair of trousers, was half a head shorter than he, and probably this disproportion had influenced the very friendly and liberal proposal.

"I wish you would sing, Mrs. Ramsay," said Mr. Redway.

"I know you are fond of music," she replied; "and you may be a master in that accomplishment for all I can tell," she added, dropping her eyelids and parting her lips.

"Oh dear no, not at all. I can scrape the fiddle, and that's all," answered the man of royal blood, to whose brains or mind the pronunciation of the word "fiddle" brought not the slightest information of the wife who used to accompany him on the piano whilst the Chevalier Garcia listened.

"What sort of music do you like, Mr. Beauclerk?"

"Tenor songs in Italian Opera," he answered. "What is your voice?"

"Soprano. And yours?"

"I have no voice."

"I know the meaning of that sort of modesty, Mr. Beauclerk. I have likened it before now to a corkscrew," said the lady.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the lunatic; "why a cork-screw?"

"Because it opens the bottle which you wish decanted."

She smiled in the moonlight with the face of a literary woman who conceives that she has delivered a stroke of wit; but a man must be the listener to create that expression of mirth.

"I have no voice," he exclaimed with unnecessary emphasis. "Will you sing me a song, Mrs. Ramsay?"

"My music is locked away in my baggage in the hold."

"But you can sing from memory?"

"A little."

"Let me conduct you to the piano."

He crooked his arm. She behaved as though she did not observe this motion of courtesy. In short, she was perfectly conscious that Mrs. Latimer and Mrs. Mowbray were watching and talking about them.

She led the way into the cuddy, or saloon, as it now would be called, and the pair were followed by a number of eyes as they disappeared through the companion-hatch.

"She certainly means to hook him," said Mrs. Mowbray. "She likes the flavour of royal blood."

Her companion laughed, but it must be admitted that Mrs. Latimer was not the only person in that ship whose opinion agreed with hers.

Moonlight was in the skylights; and the soft effulgence of lamps was in the cuddy. A little way abaft the mizzen-mast, an upright piano stood lashed to the deck. Mrs. Ramsey seated herself, and the infatuated, mendacious Mr. Redway stood up alongside of her.

"I will play you something from memory," said the lady. "It is called a 'Hungarian Rhapsody.' Did you ever hear it?"

"I expect I have," answered Mr. Redway, who could not speak the truth. "There are Rhapsodies in most of the tongues. I know two in Italian, three in French, one in German, and a very poor one in English. I shall be anxious to hear yours."

She began to play. The piano had made several voyages, but, like Captain Cook, had gained in age only, whilst it had lost nothing in its successful tours of the globe. The "Rhapsody" demanded a vast variety of

[illegible] It was a combination of sound with here and [illegible] a [illegible] stream of memory showing like the steely [illegible] a narrow river between the trunks of a crowded [illegible] Mr. Redway seemed lost in admiration of the extraordinary smoothness of the white and sparkling [illegible] of the sea.

"The Chevalier Garcia taught me how to play this," said [illegible] looking up at Mr. Redway, but always going on [illegible] "Rhapsody."

[illegible] she said she had been taught to play the thing [illegible] David it would have been all the same to her [illegible] sister, whose eclipsed mind was left unvisited by [illegible] that could in any way associate the name [illegible] with the man who had given lessons in singing [illegible] and who was a constant and welcome visitor [illegible] in Jermyn.

[illegible] the room with unusual sounds, and [illegible] of the passengers came below, and [illegible] with a [illegible]tness which was not to [illegible] that a sideways posture decorated [illegible] the skylight windows.

"[illegible]," said Mr. Redway when Mrs. [illegible] concluded the "Rhapsody" with a twiddle [illegible] that was supposed to express ecstacy of [illegible] "I don't remember ever having heard [illegible]."

[illegible] played the thing very well indeed. Her [illegible] light but firm and sympathetic, and she was [illegible] of the keys she pressed with graceful [illegible] and her head swayed choicely in delicate [illegible] as a flower bends on its stem to the music [illegible] breeze in grass and leaf. Two or three [illegible] their hands, and there was a noise of [illegible] deck. Mrs. Ramsay turned and looked at [illegible] and put the mizzen-mast with a smile.

"Will you sing me a song?" said Mr. Redway.

"I will," she answered, "if you'll play the fiddle."

"My dear madam," he responded, "I have no fiddle. Only consider how I came on board this ship."

"There is a fiddle on board, I know," she exclaimed, "I have heard it played on the forecastle. I will ask the steward to borrow it from the sailor it belongs to."

"Will you sing me a song first?" said Mr. Redway, with a vacant stare over the top of the piano as though he saw something beyond.

She mused—the listeners waited; she struck the piano, and Mr. Redway began to hum. She broke into a charming love-song by Adolphe Adams. Mr. Redway ceased to hum, and her voice, which was clear, strong and sweet, rang through the saloon and floated through the open skylights into the moon-bright air, and the moist and steady gushing of the trade wind. She sang in French, and her accent had that aroma of utterance which may be got in early youth, but can never be gained by an English man or woman in after-years. As a matter of fact, she had been sent from Australia to learn French in Paris.

When she was done, and whilst Mr. Redway was exclaiming, "Beautiful, indeed!" Mr. Harold Jansen approached the piano in a pressing, enthusiastic way.

"It is magnificent," he exclaimed, in French, and with excitement and gesticulations he praised her voice, her playing, her exquisite art, and begged to know from what master she had learnt to sing. She named three teachers, including Garcia, and it was clear that Mr. Jansen had not heard of any of them.

"Will you kindly tell the steward I wish to see him, Mr. Jansen?" said Mrs. Ramsay.

The Scandinavian fled.

"What do you want with the steward, Mrs. Ramsay, said Mr. Redway.

"I wish you to accompany me on the fiddle," she answered. "What do you know?"

"There is little in music that I do not know," he replied. "But what am I to do with a sailor's squeaking fiddle?"

The answer was intercepted by the appearance of the steward.

"Hasn't one of the sailors got a fiddle?" asked Mrs. Ramsay.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Do you think he would lend it for half an hour or so to Mr. Beauclerk?" said the lady.

Mr. Redway gazed loftily at the steward. Nevertheless, his expression of face did not betoken a mind wholly at ease.

"I should think he'd be very 'appy," exclaimed the steward.

"A fiddle-shaped cylinder, crazy with worn gut, I suspect," said Mr. Redway. "Good for a coarse jig-a-jig, no doubt, but quite unfit for you to accompany, Mrs. Ramsay."

He was putting his cunning to the proof, madman fashion. An indeterminable misgiving, a strange voice in the dark corridors of his mind, startling but proceeding from something invisible, and, to his insane imagination, awful, was influencing him. He did not know that he could not now play on the fiddle, because memory in this respect falled him; but he felt that he should not try, and there was nothing sane in him to explain the reason.

"Your modesty shall not prevail, Mr. Beauclerk," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, laughing, and clasping her fingers in her lap, and looking up at him.

If he had been in full possession of his functions, Mr.

Redway would have seen in Mrs. Ramsay's gaze the meaning of a woman who conceives that she has captured her man, and that her charms, though accompanied by the sweetest, even the most timid pleadings, can subdue him to her desires.

"Go and borrow the fiddle, steward!" said the widow. "And if the man consents, give him this for his civility."

She drew out her purse, and gave the steward a florin.

The bow-legged man rolled away with the coin, and Mrs. Ramsay's fingers toyed with the keys. You did not know what she played; her hands passed up and down as though she was in deep reverie, and as though some inner and subtle sense of melody, unconsciously to herself, was actuating her. Maybe it was a skilful trick of hers; yet her involuntary performance appeared to impress Mr. Jansen, though the mind of Mr. Redway seemed to be towing astern, or a hundred leagues distant.

The steward brought a fiddle and a bow. In expectation of a concert, nearly the whole complement of passengers—not many, indeed—had gathered in the saloon, and stood about the shaft of the mizzen-mast, near to the piano, a small expectant crowd. Mr. Redway took the fiddle and the bow, and looked at them.

"See if it is in tune, Mr. Beauclerk," said Mrs. Ramsay.

He was silent and pale. He put the fiddle into his neck, and, scraping the strings with the bow, instantly filled the saloon with the screech of a cat when it flies at another. Nothing more was needed to assure Mrs. Ramsay and all the other listeners that Mr. Beauclerk, in affirming that he could play a fiddle, was a liar. And yet it was absolutely true that this unhappy gentleman, when sane, fiddled with such dexterity as to qualify him for a stool in a superior orchestra. But it was no more wonderful, having regard to the state of his mind, that he should

have lost all knowledge of his favourite instrument, than that the professor who had narrowly escaped death from injury to the head, should have recovered to find the once familiar algebra as unintelligible as the hieroglyphics of the pyramids.

"I knew," exclaimed Mr. Redway, exalting his figure to its loftiest inch, and throwing the fiddle and the bow on the deck, "that I should not be able to do anything with a fiddle borrowed from a company of sailors."

"I never heard a harsher note in a fiddle before," said Mrs. Ramsay, gracefully revolving on the music-stool to look at the fiddle.

"What's the matter with it?" said Mr. Jansen, who picked up the instrument, and, with a wide grin, began to play "Home, Sweet Home."

"It is very close down here," said Mr. Redway. "And the ship seems to be pitching more than she did. Shall we return on deck, Mrs. Ramsay?"

"What is the time?" she asked; whilst Mr. Jansen continued to play "Home, Sweet Home," amid some murmurs of laughter.

"A quarter-past eight," exclaimed a voice.

"I shall go on deck presently," said the lady; and she rose and went to her cabin, disdaining Mrs. Mowbray with the corners of her dark eyes as she passed her.

Mr. Redway went on deck to the wailing notes of "Home, Sweet Home," saying aloud as he passed through the little knot of people—

"What true artist on the violin would attempt to accompany such a charming performer on a fiddle unfit even for a wooden-legged street beggar!"

"She'll dance badly if she means to make him her fiddler," said Mrs. Mowbray, with an acid sneer; and Mrs. Latimer's laugh closed the scraping of Mr. Jansen.

On deck the air was flooded with moonlight, and from

the vague distances of the silver mist on the sea came the soft sounds of the cataractal plashings of the coiling surge driving its tones in deeper trumpetings into the melodious thunder of the white salt foaming from the shattering bows of the ship. The captain was talking to the doctor a few fathoms abaft the mizzen rigging; the passengers were coming up from below. Forward were pearl-clad figures of sailors and steerage passengers moving, lounging, talking, and here and there the glowing bowl of a pipe was floated upwards by the rise of the ship into a similitude of the stars twinkling dimly over the head-rails.

Mr. Redway walked straight up to the captain and Dr. Macpherson, and without regard to the circumstance of their being engaged in animated conversation, subdued but earnest, he said—

"Captain, I want to ask you a question."

"I beg your pardon, sir," replied the captain, a little stiffly; for Mr. Redway was a first-class passenger who had not paid his fare, and he was wearing, without payment, the slops of the ship, and as Buzacott was a little withered sailor of strong commercial instincts who put money before blood, and whose leading lights when at sea were what he might deem the desires and expectations of his owners, he was never perfectly at ease with Mr. Redway, though he saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of his statements, and the assurance that the passage-money would be paid.

"One always goes on board ship to the captain for an opinion," said Mr. Redway, with a grave smile, "and I want to know this; if a man should find the lady whom he has made his bride with false hips, false bosom, dyed hair, false teeth——" he paused.

The skipper stared at him like an owl.

"To say no more," continued Mr. Redway, preserving

his lofty smile, "could he divorce her on the grounds that she was not the woman he believed he married?"

Dr. Macpherson's Scotch brain was slow in receptivity. It cost him a "thocht" to laugh out. The captain was too much astonished by this extraordinary question to answer immediately. After a scrutinizing stare by the moonlight to ascertain by the general aspect of Mr. Beauclerk, whether he had risen through the companion-hatch merely to make a fool of him, just as he had made a fool of the passengers by flinging down the fiddle—for Buzacott had diverted an eye through the skylight and heard and seen enough to know that Mr. Beauclerk's capacity as a fiddler was literally fiddle-de-dee—he answered—

"That's a question for the lawyers, sir."

And, being visited by a weak sense of humour, he smiled dully.

"You have travelled much and seen much, Captain Buzacott," said Mr. Redway. "I regard the mind of a British skipper as an Encyclopædia Britannica."

"It is a question for the lawyers, sir," repeated the captain.

"But even if they should answer you in the affirmative, Mr. Beauclerk," said Dr. Macpherson, "you should still be too philosophic to regard female beauty from a physiological point of view. If it be false hips and false teeth, a fascination may remain after the discovery is made, and it is quite reasonable that art should supply the deficiencies of nature, for a judge or counsel in giving an opinion might justly affirm that a man has no more right to complain that his wife won him by meretricious charms than that when she dies she should be resolved into what you perhaps could not readily catalogue. Do you follow me?"

"Yes," answered the lunatic, whose grave and courteous

attention to what was as unintelligible to him as the orders given by a captain in tacking ship, appeared to gratify Dr. Macpherson.

"For," continued the medical man, "what is beauty, when interred, but a slow oxidization into carbonic acid, ammonia, carburetted and sulphuretted hydrogen, nitric acid, and other acids, which are resolved into more simple compounds and salts till nothing remains but the bones and teeth?"

"The false teeth?" inquired Mr. Redway, with a suggestion of anxiety.

"No, sir. The real teeth. These decompose and vanish into powder, and so much for the beauty that dazzles you to-day!"

If Mr. Redway's conversation and questions were not comfortably sequential, the lofty gravity and careful courtesy of his behaviour made them seem so. The captain, under the impression that Mr. Beauclerk had slightly elevated himself by a glass too much, ceremoniously screwed his figure on his heels, and walked aft.

"May I inquire," said Dr. Macpherson, "what put it into your head to ask that question about false teeth and the rest of it?"

"I love physiology," answered Mr. Redway. "The moral you attach to beauty is very striking and impressive."

The Scotchman bowed. "If," said he, "Mrs. Ramsay——"

Mr. Redway's eyes opened wide, and his manner grew instantly agitated.

"Not a word," he cried, "I entreat, against that fascinating lady."

The astounded doctor could scarcely control his tongue. *He*, the ship's surgeon, supposed to be capable of speaking injuriously of a saloon lady-passenger, when

his policy was nothing but praise, admiration, and smirks!

"Mr. Beauclerk," he exclaimed sternly, "I beg to inform you that if your question to the captain was inspired in any degree by Mistress Ramsay's charms——"

Mr. Redway held up his hand in impassioned entreaty for silence.

"Your sight," continued the doctor, "has totally misled you."

"What do you mean?" inquired Mr. Redway.

"I mean," answered Dr. Macpherson, glancing round in fear of overhearers, "that the gilded bird of Paradise, that the painted splendour of the peacock's tail, that the fictitious glories of the dying dolphin"—here was a Paddyism with a vengeance—"are not more the gifts of nature than the charms which all people have observed in the lady we are distantly referring to."

He delivered himself in a cautious voice, and his Scotch accent, of which the imitation is not attempted here, was stronger than usual.

"Are you in love with Mrs. Ramsay?" asked the poor creature, whose mind was growing as hazy as the horizon, what with the influence of the raining moonshine upon his eyes, the ponderous, cart-horse ploughing of the ship, Dr. Macpherson's language, which was only intelligible in parts, coupled with an increased distortion of his squinting functions.

Dr. Macpherson surveyed him from head to foot, then a slow smile broke through his freckles.

"May be, Mr. Beauclerk," he answered in a note of kindness, "I shall have the pleasure of seeing you return to England with your lung perfectly restored; and with your permission," he added, with a slight touch of sarcasm, "it will give me great pleasure to introduce you to Mrs. Macpherson."

Charles II. could not have bowed with more kingly dignity than did Mr. Redway, who, lifting his cap, exclaimed—

"The introduction will be one of the happinesses of my life, and I thank you, sir, for the promise."

At that moment a hoarse voice on the forecastle sounded: "There's something black a-showing up on the weather-bow!"

"A ship on the weather-bow!" echoed the officer of the watch from the break of the poop.

"I see her, sir," bawled little Buzacott, and he added, speaking to himself, "But it's not a ship."

CHAPTER XI

THE WIDOW'S GOODNESS

GRACE was the splendid and shining quality of that night; it was in the marbled curves of the sails, in the solemn swaying of the mast-heads, whose white trucks shone with the delicate, keen, green light of the glow-worm. It was in the flying silvered manes of the chargers of the deep, shattering their burden of glorious brine against the heaving side of the ship. It was in the line of beauty described by the curving flight of the meteor, and it was also in the floating gait of Mrs. Ramsay as she crossed the deck from the companion-hatch to place herself at the side of her royal admirer who had quitted Dr. Macpherson to stare over the rail at the lumping shadow on the bow.

"What is it?" she inquired.

He did not know that she was there. He looked and stared with a behaviour of body that would have convinced any medical man that his nervous system was in a very bad way indeed.

"God bless me!" said he; "you frightened me."

Her eyes, which were full of moonlight, seemed to reproach him as though she should say, How is it possible that *I* could frighten you?

"What is that?" she inquired, and her white fingers sparkled like the stars in the heavens as she extended her hand towards the shadow.

"It is a derelict, madam," said the captain, who was passing the couple at the moment, but he did not stop to say more.

"An abandoned ship!" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay. "I wonder if there are people on board, and if the captain means to stop. Shocking to think of famine-stricken wretches sending dying glances at the inhuman ship that sails on and leaves them to their fate;" and she directed her gaze at the captain, who, with the mate was surveying the dismasted hulk, the one through a night glass, the other through the ship's telescope.

The captain's intentions were speedily to be gathered. Nearly all the passengers studded the rail, and two or three of them in eager voices questioned the captain; who replied that the vessel was water-logged, timber-laden, and abandoned; that she had probably been knocking about like that for some weeks, as might be conjectured from the glistening lines of weed she hove snake-like from the sea with each sickly reel of her. No; he was not going to stop the ship and send a boat aboard. Yes; it was very true that abandoned craft of that sort were as dangerous as a sunken rock on a lee shore, or a steamer with a Dutchman at the wheel, the look-out asleep, and the officer of the watch pausing in the cabin he had entered to fetch his pipe, to listen to the snoring of his drunken skipper. Some laughter attended this sally, which would have been more humorous had the low comedy face of the captain been clearly visible.

"I suppose he knows," said Mrs. Ramsay to her companion.

"He ought to know," replied Mr. Redway. "I just now told him that the mind of every British sea commander should be an Encyclopædia Britannica."

"What did he answer?" she asked, smiling.

"Between ourselves," he replied confidentially, "I don't think he understood me."

"Why didn't you go through with that fiddle?" she inquired. "I longed to disappoint the expectations of such poor creatures as Mrs. Mowbray."

"I took a dislike to several when they came squeezing into the cabin," answered Mr. Redway. "I wanted to be alone with you. It was our entertainment, and I desired no listeners. They were prettily sold," he went on, "and they'll get no music from me. There is something about the fellow that fiddled 'Home Sweet Home' that is very unpleasant."

He could name the tune that Mr. Jansen had played, but he did not know that he had a wife in England, and that York Manor in Wiltshire was not his property. Of such are the vagaries of a mind diseased, and no man who has made a study of mental physiology in the flesh, and not alone in books, will doubt the truth of this narrative of a brain afflicted by shipwreck.

The shadow of the night, tinctured by the pale silver of the moon, and vague with the dissolving shapes of running billows, will inform the most prosaic floating object to be encountered upon the face of the waters with a quality of mystery that shall be deep and abiding. At least to the contemplative mind, whose perception has the glorifying and enriching gifts of love and reverence. In the bald and stripping glare of the sun, yonder heaving, bulky shadow would have been the mere derelict the captain had found her. But the moonlight made it a sea spectre; she was the embodied spirit of isolation, and the loneliness in whose heart she sluggishly rolled was made mighty and profound in character by the visionary night distances with which she was encompassed. It was abeam: it was on the quarter: she gleamed with a corpse-like light of leaping salt into the ship's wake and was then

gone, amid a silence which had fallen upon those who gazed at her under the swelling stirless heights which were raising a note of summer thunder forward, and a play of the sheet lightning of summer in the ghastly eddies under the counter with their lovely revelry of spangles of the sea glow.

"There can be nobody in that ship," said Mrs. Ramsay; "the captain would know."

"It has made me feel cold," said Mr. Redway. "I am all goose-flesh."

"It is quite natural," exclaimed the lady; "such an object must recall your shipwreck to you. Forgive me prescribing for you, but my advice is, step into the cuddy and drink a small glass of brandy."

"No; it is something out of the reach of brandy," he answered.

"What is it?"

"I am worried, Mrs. Ramsay. My dream last night haunts me. I witnessed myself again in the washstand which was cast upon a desolate coast, and I walked almost in a state of nature to and fro, to and fro, wringing my hands and looking for food and for water, and bemoaning my abject poverty, which was inconclusive, as most dreams are, for what would be the use of money to me on a desolate coast where there was not even a mussel to eat, nor a leaf to conceal me?"

You might have counted twenty slowly before she answered, and her silence found no interruption in the gabble of Mr. Jansen and two gentlemen-passengers, in a sudden pistol-shot of a command from the mate to the watch concerning the easing-off of a certain staysail sheet, in the busy clacking of several ladies near the skylight, and in the voice of an infant crying in the night away down in the steerage, but audible through open hatches and skylights.

"Are you very sensitive, Mr. Beauclerk?" asked Mrs. Ramsay.

"To an affront," he replied, contracting his brows. "I've only fought one duel. It was with Sir Edward Hussey, a young baronet who made himself extremely offensive to me at a Service Club. We crossed to Calais and I winged him. After which we were arrested, but in a few hours the British consul procured our release."

Needless to say that this was a lie, and nothing but the man's preposterous state of mind could have explained his reason or motive for it. But why should Mrs. Ramsay doubt his words? It was certain that duels have been fought over and over again on the sands of Calais. Why should not Mr. Beauclerk, who was a man of blood fired by the spirit of royalty, have fought a duel with a young baronet?

"I am almost afraid to say to you what is in my mind," she exclaimed, smiling. "But you would not challenge a woman?"

"In the sweetest sense only," he responded, wearing an expression which the moonlight translated into an immediate order for a cloak and a guitar.

She averted her face and hung her head, and then, turning her eyes timidly upon him, she said—

"You have suffered so much, Mr. Beauclerk, that I should be sorry indeed if you were troubled by dreams of poverty and helplessness. Will you make use of my purse?"

This offer will be deemed highly inartistic by many who will hold that it came much too soon. But Mrs. Ramsay was one of those people whose characters are made for them and not by them. Which is a highly materialistic theory, as it is violently opposed to the assumption of an inherent self-determining power in man. Be this as it may, Mrs. Ramsay was essentially a woman

of impulse. She was rich, with a liberal indifference to money. She was rich, I say, but the yellow mintage of Australia could not and did not therefore bring her the social distinction her amiable heart panted for in unison with a great number of other amiable hearts which pant for the same thing in American and British Colonial bosoms. Mr. Beauclerk had been shipwrecked; he had been treated with the consideration his lofty social position commanded by a French Count of very ancient blood. He had been in a fashion clothed by the skipper of the *Crimson Banner* on credit, and Buzacott, accepting the gentleman's shipwreck and assertions supported by the Count as an abundant warranty, continued to provide him with shelter and food. And others of the passengers had expressed deep interest in and lively sympathy with the half-drowned offshoot of the House of St. Albans. Why, then, should not Mrs. Ramsay open her purse to him? As to the capacity for repayment—she never thought of such a thing. What she did think was—and this was the seminal impulse of her offer—"I intend that a day shall come when what is mine shall be yours, and what is yours shall be mine. For what is yours will amongst other things exalt me to a platform from which I shall be able to look down upon such beasts as Mrs. Mowbray."

It may be said that in madness as in wine the truth comes out. I cannot imagine of a gentleman who has gone mad that he should be anything more or less than a gentleman in moods and outbreaks the saddest to witness. For we must all be of opinion that the soul is always the same, and that its apparent aberrations are due to physical defects, as the steady white light inside a lantern may be deflected, dulled and rendered almost worthless as an illuminant by the quality, uncleanliness and the like, of the glass which enshrines it. This is a borrowed simile,

and I submit it as an axiomatic truth laid down by one of the most distinguished of British psychologists.

Mr. Ramsay was a gentleman first, if he was a liar and madman after, and the spirit of the gentleman was strong in him when Mrs. Ramsay with charming timidity made her offer.

"Mrs. Ramsay," he exclaimed in a voice of emotion, "there is no living soul on board this ship, there is no living creature ashore whom my memory couples with the possibility of such kindness, that I would sooner be beholden to than you. I shall never forget your generosity, and the goodness that prompts your wish to render me independent of the captain and the owners of this ship until in due course I come to my own again."

"You are thanking me for nothing," she said. "I hope you are not too proud to oblige me."

"We shall be together for many weeks yet," he continued pensively. "What is that bell? Oh, yes, spirits, wines and liqueurs on the cuddy table. The night-air feels damp. Allow me to conduct you below."

And when he was below, seated at her side, with a glass of whisky and water in front of him, whilst she sipped a tumbler of seltzer and claret, he told her a very singular lie.

"Your kindness," he said softly, that his voice should not reach some other passengers who were at the table, "reminds a curious incident which may have been intended as a sort of prognostic of our meeting and your goodness. My bed at York Manor was twice occupied by Charles I., and I preserve it with a particular reverence for that reason. One night I awoke with a start. The drapery of the bed is comparatively modern, and very rich and heavy. A few pale light of a phosphorescent character seemed to illuminate the room, and at the foot of the bed I clearly discerned the figure of a lady apparelled in the attire in

which the contemporary artists painted the portraits of Queen Henrietta. In her hands she held a purse which opened, and there fell from it on the counterpane a number of Jacobuses and angels and other coins of that period."

"Weren't you horribly frightened?" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, with her eyes dilated.

"I leaned forward to pick up one of the coins to satisfy myself by tangible evidence that I was not dreaming. In an instant the preternatural light was extinguished and the room was plunged in darkness, amid which, seemingly glimmering afar, was the dim star-lighted atmosphere of the night visible through four stripes of window, the upper portions of which are glazed with coloured glass worthy in design and beauty of the Venetian artists. I struck a match and lighted a candle at my bedside. There were no coins on the counterpane."

"What could it have been?" inquired Mrs. Ramsay, whose parted lips, whose eager gaze of impassioned attention, were causing the corners of more than one mouth at that table to droop.

"It was not a dream," said the lunatic. "It was a waking vision. It was a ghost. It could not have been a ghost so far as I am concerned, because I don't believe in ghosts."

"But that would have nothing to do with the fact that it was a ghost," she said.

"It was a sort of prophetic allegory of this our charming association," he exclaimed in his loftiest, most dignified manner, stroking his scissors-trimmed beard. "It was her Majesty the Queen presenting herself, with material help, to her sovereign lord the King, who was occasionally in need of money; just as you, madam, present yourself with your generous purse to me."

The poor widow, inflamed by dreams of a princess's situation in life, utterly and hopelessly failed to see that the man who addressed her, who had been picked out of a washstand in pyjamas only, was a crank steeped to the extreme limits of his tongue in lies.

The morals pointed by sea perils and adorning the tales of them do not always require to be driven home to the hearts and bosoms of shipowners by Acts of Parliament. It was so in the case of the derelict passed by the *Crimson Banner* in the night. For early next morning a raft, massively constructed, but as vacant of life as the boards of a theatre when the last man after midnight has gone home to bed, was sighted on the weather-bow, and as it came and went with the leap and heel of the sea, rocking and tossing like a cot in a gale, the telescope interpreted the bright thing that was sparkling frostily in an interstice in the fabric as a biscuit-tin. And it was seen to be a biscuit-tin as the raft swept by, foaming, sodden, and lifeless. But Captain Buzzacott's port foretopmast studding-sail was swelled hard as marble by the north-east wind, and though the little skipper was in no hurry, he had no mind to stop his vessel, which was doing about eight knots and raising in her bows the thunder of an old line-of-battle ship storming through the roaring Forties, merely to examine a biscuit-tin which might prove empty.

It was not empty, however, as was afterwards discovered by a schooner that sent a boat to pick it up off the raft. It contained a letter of four foolscap pages addressed by the captain of the wreck that the *Crimson Banner* had passed to his wife in England. The vessel had been an English barque, and was homeward-bound with a cargo of valuable timber, but her masts had been rotten when she sailed from England, and the owners knew it, and ordered the captain to proceed and bring

home the ship with the same masts standing in her. This order, reverent and gracious in its sympathy with the risks and hardships of that section of humanity which is called sailors, was blasphemed by bad weather, and on the road home, all three lower masts went by the board, smashing the boats and killing several men. The captain wrote his letter whilst the hulk was slowly settling to a strake, when she would float upon her own cargo, and the men constructed a raft; and the captain wrote as though he knew that he and his men were doomed, and that his wife and child would be left without bread and friendless. All the blood of his burning heart—of a heart outraged by years of bitter toil, infamous treatment, pay inadequate to the maintenance of a lap-dog—was in that letter, and the master of the schooner, when he handed it at Yarmouth to the receiver of wrecks, said, "Mister, I'm no scholard, and man and boy I've followed the sea thirty-five years, but in all my goin' a-fishin' I never read more awful truths about the calling than is wrote in this 'ere, and I only 'ope to read it as a piece in the newspapers, for there are many folks ashore as wants to be larned in what we sailors have to go through to get a living."

At sea the progress of events is measured by land-falls, parallels of latitude, degrees of longitude, the barometer, the spouting whale, the ghastly blink of ice in the convulsive whirl of the snowstorm. The *Crimson Banner* was in the latitude of the Cape Verde Islands, with a strong, long, quartering swell chasing her, and the North-east Trade blowing its trumpets through the arched foot of her canvas, and wringing the pibroch out of the harp-taut rigging before any incident worth recording came along. Meanwhile you will ask, what was the general opinion among the passengers of that ship as to Mr. Beauclerk? Had they by this time discovered that his mind was warped? Had he to any small extent recovered

his faculties? What was the state of his lung? And was his general health impaired by the condition of his brains?

As a matter of fact, the passengers, together with Dr. Macpherson, the captain, and three mates, were all agreed—some of them tacitly, especially the captain—that Mr. Beauclerk was a man of distinguished antecedents, largely verified by the unquestionable resemblance he bore to certain portraits of King Charles I.; next, that he was not perfectly truthful, and that many of his statements were to be taken with a grain of salt, which, on the whole, was accepted as a venal offence, as the man had come aboard almost naked, and, wanting tangible proof, naturally desired that his state of life, in a sociological as well as in a commercial sense, should be accepted as loftier and fatter than it really was.

Yet, though Mr. Redway's health had visibly improved since his rescue, and though the doctor declared with emphasis that the lingering symptoms of tuberculosis would vanish long before the patient returned home, the fact remained that the unfortunate man continued mentally in the condition in which he was found; that is, he did not know that his name was Redway; he did not know that he was a married man with an expectant wife living in the neighbourhood of Colville Square, Bayswater, London; he was convinced, with all the emphasis that lunacy can supply, fortified by misconceptions or perverted beliefs, that his name was Beauclerk, that he was the possessor of a considerable manorial estate in Wiltshire, and that he had a large balance at Coutts', with a constant and copious revenue from hereditary sources. And these false imaginations being the skeleton of his delusion, he fleshed the bones with creations of reason, which were made luminous and life-like in tint, substance, and quality by the lambent fires of sincere memory glancing and

dancing amid the thick shadows which enveloped his functionally perturbed intellect.

Thus stands the figure of this man as we see him when the *Crimson Banner* is on the parallel of the Cape Verde Islands—a recondite subject indeed, too metaphysically profound for the interpretation of this pen, a psychical study of which there are numerous examples in medical and in learned works—problems of the soul left uninterpreted by those who submit them, conundrums in metaphysics whose solution is not approached by the enumeration which limits the despairful efforts of the writers.

It was a Wednesday evening. The Trade wind had slackened, but the waters streamed friskily to its warm gushing, and as the slow, round-bowed ship sank in curtseys upon the underrun of the swell, with white mastheads in stately motion like giant wands directed to forward and after stars by some mighty spirit-hand compelling attention to the glories of the deep-blue ether of the night, the full bosoms of the topsail and fore-course and top-gallant sail sank in and floated out again with movement of respiration, and the peace and beauty of the inter-tropic sea was left undisturbed by the notes of a concertina played by a sailor away forward in the forecastle gloom shed by the swinging wing of the fore-topmast stay sail. All the passengers but the children and nurses were on deck. The captain had been walking to and fro arm-in-arm with a lady. This was a gallant practice of his in a second dog-watch, and he was not so blooming particular, as the Jacks forward noticed, but that the old were as carefully chosen as the young.

This night the lady he had been strolling with, thinking she heard her child crying—for sounds rose clearly from the steerage to the open skylights—pulled her hand from his arm with an apology, and the skipper was left alone, lord paramount of the weather-side of his quarter-deck.

But not for long. Mrs. Ramsay—who had been conversing with Mr. Redway, Mr. Jansen, and another gentleman on the lee side of the poop—broke from the little knot, and approached the captain.

"It is my turn to walk with you, Captain Buzacott," said she.

"With pleasure, madam;" and the little man projected his arm into the shape of an angle iron.

She pressed his cuff with her sparkling fingers—Colonial ladies greatly love the diamond and the display of it—and they paced the deck. Though Buzacott was a short man with short legs, so that his steps were short, Mrs. Ramsay did not attempt to keep pace with him. She floated in independent beauty of figure by his side. What is more shocking to the fastidious eye than the gait of a woman keeping time with a man's pace? It is the goose-step of the kitchen and the counter, and is chiefly to be observed in young females artistically dressed in remnants or gorgeous in the hues of the cheap sales, when they walk on a Sunday with gents in tall, stove-pipe hats, immensely high collars, coat-tails reaching to the middle of their calves, and the creases of a week's slumber in a chest of drawers in the Sunday pants, which generally terminate somewhat uncouthly at the boots.

Captain Buzacott and Mrs. Ramsay were old acquaintance. She had sailed with him twice in seven years and he was third mate of the ship in which she made her first voyage from Australia to England. She was entitled, therefore, to speak to him with a certain freedom which he could not misunderstand. He was almost old enough to be her father, and as the man who swayed the destinies of his vessel, who held in his hand the lives of all who floated in her, he should be in a position to easily fill, when needed, the post of paternal counsellor to any one in want of such opinions as were

likely to be contained within the horizon of a seaman's understanding.

After a few words about the weather, the fineness of the night and the like, Mrs. Ramsay said—

"Mr. Beauclerk seems to be regaining his health very rapidly."

"Very rapidly indeed," answered Captain Buzacott.

"What does the doctor think?" she asked.

"He is a man of great prudence and is never in a hurry with an opinion, and he thinks very favourably of the case, which is a very good thing for Mr. Beauclerk."

"You must feel awfully proud to be helpful in preserving his life, Captain," said Mrs. Ramsay, with a slight lisp, which she would sometimes affect when she made a girlish remark.

"It was a narrow shave with him," answered Buzacott, with a skipper's stare to windward, as, arm-in-arm, he wheeled round with the lady with the planks of the deck whitening into the fairness and purity of coral to the contrast of the thin black lines of pitch which marked their width. "I am still puzzled by the name he gives his ship."

"Surely not, captain."

"But, my dear lady, he knows a ship as well as I do, and the *Sandown Castle* he refers to is, or was a barque, whilst the other *Sandown Castle*, which is a ship, can't be within his meaning, as she is on the high seas, homeward-bound."

"If he doesn't know, who should?" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, with a glance in the direction of the three men she had left.

"Can't imagine a sailing-ship from a northern port calling at Southampton for passengers," said Buzacott.

"But the Frenchman found him in a washstand," said Mrs. Ramsay. "You'll not deny that?"

"No."

"He must have been shipwrecked, then, to have been found in a washstand."

"I never doubted that," said Captain Buzacott.

"He gives you the name of the ship, and you question it," continued Mrs. Ramsay. "Now, why should you?"

The little fellow's tongue stirred in the first movement of protest.

"You can't question," pursued the lady, with a small show of warmth, "that he is a gentleman."

"Well, I dare say he is, and I'm not going to argue with you, Mrs. Ramsay, as to the meaning of the word."

"A gentleman never tells lies," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Here and there one," said the captain, drily, looking into her starlighted eyes from about half an inch below the level of them.

"I cannot imagine," said Mrs. Ramsay, "any one in English society, outside of Royalty of course, more highly connected than Mr. Beauclerk. You will meet with people who boast that they have royal blood in their veins——"

"Irishmen," interrupted the skipper.

"And Welshmen," continued the widow. "But when their boasts are put to the proof, they end, like going through the Bible to the Apocrypha, and all is doubt and invention. But the name of Beauclerk speaks for itself. It is the family name of the Duke of St. Albans. Besides, look at his treasures! Pictures of his ancestors by Vandyck and others, the bed in which the poor hunted King slept on several occasions! Even his visions or dreams are royal."

"Oh yes, he is a very fine gentleman, I am sure," said Captain Buzacott, who was waiting for the mate to order the watch to tail on and get a small pull at the lee-top-gallant and main-royal braces, as the topmost leech feebly

rippled against the stars to each downward stroke of the flying jibboom, which proved that the wind had shifted by something into the east.

"I want to tell you, Captain Buzacott," said Mrs. Ramsay, continuing to urge the little man into his quarter-deck walk by the grasp of his arm, "that you need be under no alarm"—Buzacott started, the master of a ship under an alarm!—"as to Mr. Beauclerk's capacity," continued the widow, "of repaying you for the expenses you will have incurred on his account."

"Of course," answered the skipper, drily, "I am bound to consider that his balance at Coutts' is large. Pity his pass-book did not float off with him in the washstand."

"I don't mean that," she exclaimed. "*I* will see that you are repaid."

"He is a deucedly lucky fellow," said the withered old salt, immediately catching the under-meaning of her words "I am to wish you joy, then?"

"Not yet. But if your ship is in harbour, you shall certainly be present," said the widow, smiling into the low-comedian face a little above the level of her shoulder.

"Most happy, believe me," answered Captain Buzacott. "You have tried it once," he added bluntly, "and ought to know."

She gazed gravely and in silence at the dim sea-line, and Buzacott thought he had put his foot in it.

"I know," she exclaimed in his ear with petulant emphasis, "that a childless widow is a desolate creature, and I cannot but think that the prospects of our Colonies would improve if the ladies of Australia took more care, or at all events exercised more patience, in their selection of husbands."

She slightly tossed her head as she pronounced these words, as though memory, and perhaps personal memory, was the inspiration of her speech.

"Well," said the captain, "I have very little knowledge of ladies and their hearts, and it's to be supposed that they understand their own meaning and wishes. This is November, and the gentleman was picked up by the French yacht last month. 'Tis a short wooing, madam, but your eyes don't need to dance in the starlight to tell me that man to you isn't one of those sealed books which when opened are printed in a language difficult to understand."

Her agreeable smile showed that she accepted this remark as a compliment.

"But," continued the skipper, as though in soliloquy, "the gentleman can't play the fiddle."

"Don't remain under any such impression," exclaimed the widow. "I am perfectly certain by the way he took hold of the fiddle and the bow that he can play the fiddle to perfection, and if he declines, I know his reason. I may as well tell it you, captain, who are my father-confessor."

The tone of her voice was cordial, gracious, and pleasing, and the little man gazed with a wrinkled smile of sailorly kindness at the face of which the revelation was the stars'.

"The fact is," continued the widow, "he has taken a strong dislike to Mrs. Mowbray, and one or two others, and he has no intention of subjecting himself to their caustic criticism."

Captain Buzacott was too old and too prudent a sea-wielder of the destinies on the ocean of the people committed to his charge, to utter a single word of comment, and a few minutes later the widow released his arm and rejoined Mr. Redway, who leaned alone over the rail to leeward, watching the white fire-tinctured sea as it streamed aft, hissing like disturbed and infuriated reptiles.

CHAPTER XII

MR. JANSEN'S ART

CABIN life on board such a ship as the *Crimson Banner* did not at all resemble cabin life upon the headlong steamships of these days. Now, even in a voyage to New Zealand, there is little time between port and port for the love-making, the flirtations, the scandals, and the rest of it, which contributed to the diversions, and in a measure neutralized the monotony of the sea voyage under canvas. Think of a vessel with a cuddy full of passengers, male and female, young and middle-aged—for the old seldom went afield—becalmed for six weeks at a stretch in the equatorial regions; scarce a cat's-paw in six weeks to blurr the radiant blue mirror into whose heart the day-beam on high sinks its roasting flames; scarce a whisper in the violet-dark deepness of the night to win a sigh from the hanging canvas. Small wonder that the mails were delivered five months after date of postage; that the round voyage to the Antipodes brimmed to overflowing the large measure of sometimes fifteen months; that women made love and men went mad; that the provisions shrank, and the fresh water stank and sank; that the weevil winked at the sailor from the pores of his biscuit; that the boatswain added new oaths to the terminology of the forecastle; that the white hammock of the dead was a frequent flash from the ship's side; and that, in short, the passage and the return were infernally long, so wide a

stage of weeks as to admit of the performance of a hundred human dramas in one revolving moon.

I need not repeat that the *Crimson Banner* was one of the slowest old ships of her time, but with a reputation for safety and prudence which kept her cabin accommodation full, out and home. Her log is not before me; I am unable, therefore, to state the time she took in passing out of the North-east Trades into that zone of calms and baffling light airs which have done more to enrich the language of the sailors, both fore and aft, than the salt provisions which constipate them into a chronic condition of mutiny, scarcely suppressed, and often ebullient.

Enough, if we come to a quiet afternoon with folds of sky-blue sea gently rolling, a soft breathing of wind off the starboard beam, and the horizon broken almost directly ahead of the ship by a lustrous patch, which the telescope reports to be the canvas of a ship. The awning was spread, and the poop was bathed in shadow, but the bright glare beyond where the shafts of masts rose with their burden of canvas, was rendered more dazzling yet to the eye by involuntary contrast with the cavernous shadow of awning it gazed from, and the line of the horizon worked in sinuous motion through the bluish haze of heat which the sweating sides and furnace-hot rails sent up into the atmosphere to a height far above the level of the ridge ropes, and through this dissembling medium you witnessed the white patch far ahead fluctuating like the gleaming pinion of a sea bird aslant to the sun.

In this shadow of awning sat, somewhat isolated from the other passengers, the acute and acidulated Mrs. Mowbray on a camp-stool which, if the ship suddenly rolled, was in the highest degree likely to capsize with her. She was knitting a pair of socks for one of the children, the child was not hers, and as she knitted she

sometimes slightly frowned, and sometimes slightly sneered, and now and again she lifted her eyes from her polished knitting-needles to direct a glance, as keen as they were, at Mr. Beauclerk and Mrs. Ramsay, who sat together in the shade in the forward part of the poop, pleasantly fanned by the eddying currents of wind from the swinging sails.

Presently Mr. Jansen's head showed above the top of the poop-ladder, and his whole figure, draped in a camlet jacket, a soft, squash grey hat, like to those affected by the artistes of the music-hall, and white canvas shoes, approached Mrs. Mowbray. Mr. Jansen seated himself alongside of her.

"You do not find it too hot to work?" said he.

"The heat never affects me," was the answer.

"Then nature has given you a very good heart," said the Scandinavian, with an inscrutable smile so far as his meaning went, though he disclosed a fairly good set of white teeth.

If she heard satire or irony in his language she gave it no heed.

"Pray," said she, "is it true, Mr. Jansen, that you can send people to sleep and make them tell the truth by compulsion of your will?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Mr. Jansen; "who has been talking about me?"

"You told Mrs. Latimer that you had the power."

"Well, it is true."

"What do you call this gift or art?"

"Oh, the science," he answered, "is well known by the term of electro-biology."

"And what can you do?" inquired Mrs. Mowbray, dropping her knitting to fold her hands, and look at him.

"I can put you to sleep—no, I do not mean that. I

can compel you to withdraw your will from the direction of your thoughts and concentrate it upon your eyes, which will slowly, or softly, induce sleep, or a condition of reverie, which will enable me so to control you that you shall answer my questions truthfully, and be absolutely at the control of *my* will as regards your actions, desires, volitions, and so forth."

"My goodness gracious me, Mr. Jansen," cried Mrs. Mowbray, with excitement visible in the expression of her eyes. "You must be possessed with a devil. I am frightened of you." She seemed to shrink on her camp-stool.

"I seldom exercise my gift," said Mr. Jansen, who was clearly amused by the topic they had fallen on.

"Can you make people see into the future?" she asked.

He smiled wisely and said nothing, leaving her to suppose that he could.

"I should very much like to see Mr. Beauclerk under the influence of your spells," said Mrs. Mowbray. "It would be funny to listen to his perverted recollections of the pages of Burke and Debrett."

"Well," said the Scandinavian, "I know little about your English nobility. As a democrat and freethinker, I do not care to know. But the little that Mr. Beauclerk has said about the British aristocracy—which I have heard him say, I mean, for he may talk a great deal behind my back—seems to me to have been quite right."

She resumed her knitting with an impatient face, and, without looking at him, said, "I wish you would try him with your powers."

"I have not the least objection," answered Mr. Jansen, languidly, "if he will consent. Ask him, Mrs. Mowbray."

"I? Oh dear no. But I think Mrs. Ramsay might

be induced to ask him, and I am sure he would do anything to oblige her, even to the risk of being forced to tell the truth."

"Ha, ha," laughed Mr. Jansen, who secretly despised the woman for her spleen and mean jealousies, and thought she looked disagreeably old as she sat knitting.

"If I can contrive," continued the lady, "to bring Mr. Beauclerk under your spell, will you exert your powers?"

This was a Paddyism, not however to be traced to a drop of Irish blood in her, for surely even a single drop would have made her more generous and charitable.

"If the gentleman freely consents, I shall be happy to biologize him," responded Mr. Jansen.

"I have your word. It will be great fun. Besides," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray, "the time is tedious and the voyage eternal, and the captain does not seem to care whether the wind blows in front or behind. I saw the cook throw an empty bottle overboard yesterday, and I declare, when I came on deck this morning, I thought I could see it yonder," and she pointed to the tail of the ship's wake. "It must be a wonderful art," she went on. "Most deeply interesting. Special, no doubt; I mean everybody hasn't got the gift. I guessed from your face, when I first met you, Mr. Jansen, that you were endowed with peculiar qualities."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Scandinavian, who felt safe in that unintelligible sound.

He rose and sauntered in the direction of a group of three, to whom the captain now and then addressed a word as he paced to and fro.

"I do wish," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray, in a voice so hard and loud that Mr. Beauclerk and Mrs. Ramsay stopped their talk to look at her—"I do wish," she cried, addressing a nurse in whose arms a baby was blubbering

with prickly heat or a coming tooth, "that you would carry that child away. The heat makes such a noise perfectly distracting. Is there not room enough in this ship for a squalling baby? I wonder that Mrs. St. Clair should allow you to make her infant the terror of people who want to keep cool and read or think."

Mr. St. Clair, who was not far off, overhearing these words about his wife, contracted his heavy black eyebrows into the frown of a stage bandit as he looked at Mrs. Mowbray, seeking her eye. She, however, was in search of Mrs. Latimer, and saw her talking to a gentleman at the rail which protected the forward margin of the poop from the quarter-deck. She called her, and Mrs. Latimer immediately approached and took the seat which had been vacated by Mr. Jansen.

"I have been having a strange talk," said Mrs. Mowbray, sobering her voice.

"With whom?" inquired Mrs. Latimer.

"With Mr. Jansen."

"About spirit-rapping, clairvoyance, and so on, I suppose?" said Mrs. Latimer.

"About his power of so subjugating another's will as to compel him to speak the truth about himself and things in general in the sleep or reverie into which he is flung."

"Well?" said Mrs. Latimer.

"I should immensely like to see Mr. Beauclerk under Mr. Jansen's influence. I believe a few questions put to him whilst narcotized by Mr. Jansen's eyes or powers would help Mrs. Ramsay to clear her mind of some visions which make her expectations gorgeous."

"I should leave her to work out her own destiny," said Mrs. Latimer, doubtfully, with a rapid glance at the couple they were talking about. "She is rich enough to afford to play the fool."

"But you overlook the fun of it," said Mrs. Mowbray. "I don't say that he's not a gentleman; but suppose socially that he proves no better than Mr. St. Clair yonder? I cannot help holding that such pretentiousness, such unwomanly avidity as Mrs. Ramsay has displayed, should be disciplined."

The lady they had referred to had not the slightest doubt they were conversing about her, and said as much to Mr. Redway, who, with a look of exaltation mingled with a contemptuous regal dignity, muttered—

"Two old cats! Don't heed 'em!" And went on telling lies.

And perhaps a sort of apology may be found for Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer in the appearance of Mrs. Ramsay; for she was dressed in purest white, with just such a hint of trimming as might signify mourning in a very faint degree, a Parisian hat and feather which could not have weighed more than five ounces, under which her bronzed hair shone like ruddy gold, whilst her complexion was sweetened and purified by the violet shadow in which they sat, so that, taking her as she offered herself, she might have passed for six-and-twenty, an enormity which, when coupled with her charming smiles at Mr. Beauclerk, and his royal and stately conduct to her, was quite enough to make Mrs. Mowbray pine for Mr. Jansen and his powers of the devil, and even to incline the heart of the less acid Mrs. Latimer that way.

"Does Mr. Jansen intend to ask Mr. Beauclerk to become a subject?" inquired Mrs. Latimer.

"He says that he is willing to try him," answered Mrs. Mowbray.

"When does he mean to begin?"

"He'll want persuading," answered the caustic lady.

"I'll speak to the doctor," said Mrs. Latimer.

"Good!" muttered Mrs. Mowbray, muzzling her voice

into her knitting-needles as she plied them. "The very man—for medical reasons—excellent!"

"What do you make of that sail ahead?" exclaimed a gentleman, addressing the captain, who was looking through the telescope at what had been a bright patch on the horizon, but was slowly enlarging like the rising moon.

"She is a vessel of some sort, but rather curiously rigged," was little Buzacott's answer.

"How long will she take to come near us?" inquired a lady.

"The breeze is failing," answered the captain, looking aloft, "and she shows like a fixed beacon; it's we who seem to be rising her. I doubt if she'll be abreast much before daybreak."

The little skipper was right; the sun was drying out the wind, and that tropic glassiness of glare which makes the equatorial temperature as stinging, so to speak, to the sight as it is to the flesh, was rolling in its swooning way into the atmosphere, the herald of calms, lemon-squashes and the rain-like patter of reef points upon white breasts panting to each caressing heave of the burnished deep. The captain spoke in a loud voice; his observations, therefore, were audible all over the poop. They reached the ears of Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway, who broke off in their *tête-à-tête* talk to duck and peer at the distant shining object which came and went under the foot of curving canvas as the laborious Australian liner—a waggon of her time—bowed and lifted her figure-head.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Ramsay, "that the captain will take the first opportunity that comes along to report your safety, Mr. Beauclerk?"

"He need not trouble himself," replied Mr. Redway. "Certainly by this time the Count has communicated with Europe, and those who are in the smallest degree interested in my safety may have heard that I am proceeding to

Australia in a ship that is not named the *Sandown Castle!*"

It is strange how stubborn was his perverted memory in this. He was not at heart a pugilist, but he would have stood up with iron muscles and flaming eyes to any man who had given the lie to his lie, who had told him that his first ship was the *Princess Royal*, and that she had foundered not only with his clothes, but also with a considerable slice of his intellect.

"Aren't you popular with your relatives," said Mrs. Ramsay, coyly, "that you speak of them with such contemptuous unconcern?"

"The Duke of St. Albans and I get on very well," he answered; "and there are two or three others I thoroughly like, at whose houses I have spent some of my happiest hours; and these are the people you will be delighted with, as they will be charmed with you."

She coloured, but her eyes contined to repose softly and gratefully upon his, for the infatuated woman was now thinking him the handsomest man she had ever seen, certainly one of the most noble and distinguished, perfectly kingly, according to her notions of such things gotten from reading the daily papers and certain works of fiction; and as a crown to her dream of his perfections, she was hourly thinking of him and nightly dreaming of him as her husband.

"The Beauclerks," continued the liar, "are numerous, as you may suppose, and you may accept it as a social axiom that in proportion as one's kith and kin are many, so are they objectionable."

"I quite agree in that," said Mrs. Ramsay, emphatically.

"If I died a childless bachelor," pursued the madman, "my estates, under the terms of a progenitor's will, would go to a certain individual, who, though he bears a name

which a poet would envy as an inspiration, chose to marry a woman who had been a bar-keeper at a Plymouth hotel, and you may judge of the quality, grain, and appearance of his issue from this statement of mine."

Whilst these two people were thus talking, Mrs. Latimer stood up, and peering through the skylight, saw Dr. Macpherson seated at the cuddy table, reading. She well understood that most of the passengers were on deck, and saying to Mrs. Mowbray, "I will take this opportunity of talking to the doctor, who is alone," she stepped to the companion-way and descended the ladder. Nobody was in the cuddy saving the doctor. She halted at his side, and said—

"What are you reading?"

He looked up and answered, "'Abbotsford.'"

"I cannot read Scott," she exclaimed. "Your country makes much of this writer. Why does it not praise Smollett? Is it because he has created in 'Roderick Random' a type of Scotchman with carrot parings for hair, which the world, whilst it continues to love a good thing, will not let die?"

"Mrs. Latimer," answered Dr. Macpherson, "I am sorry to understand that you are acquainted with the works of Smollett."

She sat down beside him.

"I have been a great reader in my time," she said in a soothing way, as though her literary reference just now was merely badinage. "The Scotch believe in second sight. Do you know anything about it?"

"I know a very great deal about it," responded Dr. Macpherson.

"Do you believe in Spiritualism?" inquired Mrs. Latimer.

"I intend," he answered with a grave smile, "to [illegible] all such questions on paper, which shall be enclosed

in a sealed tin box, not to be opened until after my death."

"How very funny!" said Mrs. Latimer. "Do you know that there is a gentleman on board whose powers of mind are so great that he can induce a state of reverie almost like to somnambulism in another whom he calls his 'subject,' and who in that state will speak freely and truthfully to the suggestions made to him."

"Who is the gentleman?" asked the doctor.

"Mr. Jansen."

"Well," said the doctor, after a pause, "I am no enemy to experiment and inquiry into the phenomena of the human mind. There is much that is fallacious in electro-biology, and much that is deserving of serious consideration. And I am of opinion," he continued, gradually broadening his accent, "that a man's will may be subjected by another's will: though I hold that his mental operations are independent, despite their being directed by suggestions."

"What sort of subject do you think Mr. Beauclerk would make?" asked Mrs. Latimer.

"He might clear up the mystery that puzzles the captain's mind as to there being two full-rigged ships called the *Sandown Castle*," said the doctor.

"Perhaps that, and some other mysteries," exclaimed Mrs. Latimer, softly. "We have but his word, and Mrs. Ramsay as a lady claims the protection of every gentleman on board this ship."

"I would not mess about with them, if I were you," said the doctor. "He's getting on well. To throw him into a state of catalepsy might give accentuation to his lung complaint."

"Nonsense!" cried Mrs. Latimer. "Perhaps he has not told us half he would like to say, and would be delighted to know, when he comes to, that he has added

to his importance by revelations which he is too modest, when left to his own will, to make."

"Well, you'll do as you please," said Dr. Macpherson, taking hold of his book as though he was about to rise.

"Will you ask Mr. Jansen to try his powers on Mr. Beauclerk?" said Mrs. Latimer, bluntly. "The thing would look in order coming from a doctor."

"I'll just do nothing of the kind," answered Dr. Macpherson. "He has revealed enough. What further expectations have you?"

"Have you studied him pretty closely, doctor?" said the lady, who was not to be easily disconcerted.

"He has received just the same degree of attention he would have enjoyed had he paid his fare," answered the doctor

"I fancy he is absent-minded," said Mrs. Latimer, "and in fits of abstraction makes statements which Mr. Jansen's art might be the means of correcting."

"I do not observe that he is absent-minded," answered Dr. Macpherson. "On the contrary, his wits seem all there. An absent-minded man is a study. Mr. Beauclerk's behaviour does not bring him under my observation. I compare him with Dr. Robert Hamilton, a famous professor of Aberdeen, who would pull off his hat to his own wife in the street and apologize for not having the pleasure of her acquaintance; who would go to his college with one of his wife's white stockings on one leg, and one of his own black ones on the other; who would invite the students to call on him and fine them for coming to insult him; who would run against a cow in the road, beg her pardon, and hope she was not hurt; and bully a post he had knocked his head against for not getting out of the way. When Mr. Beauclerk is as amusing as old Professor Hamilton was, I'll treat him for absent-mindedness."

And the doctor, with some laughter crackling in his throat, carried his book away into his cabin.

When two ladies, whose years may with strict propriety be referred to as "advanced," combine their arts and parts in a scheme of mischief, they are tolerably certain to make fair progress, though they may fail to realize the issue they contemplate. This is well understood in places where middle-aged ladies may be found in plenty. The false front is often the visible and outward expression of the false heart, and elderly females, heedless of the admonitions of bones once beloved and now heaving the too solid earth into billows in parish cemeteries, have been known to conspire in bathing-gowns in Turkish baths, against the domestic peace of people to whom they bow in the streets with smiles, and at whose houses they may be seen seated with cups and saucers in their hands. What was the upshot of Mrs. Mowbray's and Mrs. Latimer's confederacy against poor, dear Mrs. Ramsay, with her head of bronzed hair, her fine figure, her gay and winning smile, her natural appetite for the coaxing cluster of grapes which to the palate of the inexpert hangs in everlasting sourness?

The time was about three-quarters of an hour before dinner, and the captain and Mr. Jansen might have been seen pacing the side of the poop that would rightly be called to windward, owing to the posture of the yards of the ship, though at this hour there was no wind; the sun was slowly shrinking his beams, and faintly reddening, as the revolution of the earth dimly dyed the entranced atmosphere with the weak forerunning shadow of the fine purple of the night; and his wake was a shaft of tropic glory, sounding the depths in a column of gold, whose base was on the ooze. But the movements of the ship sent subtle airs or draughts through the heat, and the cheek was fanned as by the beat of viewless pinions.

Mr. Jansen occasionally paused to gesticulate, and fell into contortions of foreign dumb show, halting at times, and compelling little Buzacott to halt too, appealing to the skipper at moments with a frowning stare, the right fore-finger against the nose, the right elbow supported in the palm of the left hand, until at last Captain Buzacott exclaimed—

"Well, I withdraw my objection. Try it on, sir! Try it on! The mate shall bring a man aft when dinner is over, if a hand forward can be found willing."

"A glass of grog, captain," said Mr. Jansen, "would make a sailor sit for his portrait to the devil."

And, having got his way—and the reader will thank me for having withheld his very scientific reasoning, unintelligible in part to Captain Buzacott—the Scandinavian asked, "What sort of ship is that, I wonder?" and, receiving no answer, strolled with an air of indifference to the place where Mrs. Mowbray was seated.

What ship was it? She lay clean hove up on the satin-smooth surface that was undulating like a carpet when a high wind blows under it through the flooring. She was now perfectly distinguishable through the glass, and she sat swaying, tremulous with shadows of her own making, and flashful with the glittering rubies her strange sides lifted from the sea—the strangest floating fabric ever beheld by the eye of the modern mariner. She puzzled the captain; she puzzled the second mate, who at the dinner-hour came on deck to relieve the chief mate, who was also puzzled; she puzzled the cook, the butcher, and the boatswain; and the men forward, who tried to grasp her meaning and nationality with eyes sheltered by the sharp of their hands, were also puzzled, and turned their quids, and soiled the sweet surface alongside with chocolate-coloured froth from their lips; and one said, "Smite my eyes, if she ain't a South-Sea oysterman!" And another

said, "Blame me, if her sprit-sail yard ain't braced up!" And a third delivered some criticism in the language of the highway on her standing-jib, her spread of shrouds, and the material of her hull, which he declared seemed to him to consist wholly of barnacles and periwinkles.

At five o'clock they went to dinner in the cabin. Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway sat together. They had sat together since the date of Mr. Redway's first appearance at that table. As I have said, all had seen, and all still saw, how things stood with this couple. The general prevailing impression had declined into one of indifference, saving, of course, the sensations induced in that conglomeration of acrid particles labelled Mrs. Mowbray, and in one or two others in a less degree. Strange that the phantasm of Mrs. Redway did not step from that brain-cell in her husband's head, in which it lay dormant as an Idea, and sit between the two, cooling the feast of feeling and of meat like a tedious parson's long grace before dinner. But the Idea remained locked up, and lie after lie was delivered, with regal look and most gentlemanly tone, into the greedy, pretty ear alongside—that white ear whose topmost dainty curve glimmered in sheen of pearl through the bronze of the hair that negligently caressed it.

News in that limited principality, a ship, travels apace, and amongst those of the passengers who understood that Mr. Jansen was going to amuse them after dinner was Mrs. Mowbray, who called from her seat to the captain: "I hope, Captain Buzacott, that you will offer yourself as a subject to Mr. Jansen."

"I don't understand you, ma'am," responded the little skipper, who felt his importance invaded by this question.

"What do you mean by a subject, Mrs. Mowbray?" asked a gentleman.

"Oh, Mr. Jansen will explain. You shall see him perform," answered the lady.

"I do not perform," remarked Jansen, with some slight severity. "I do not sell pills in a market-place, nor am I a Pierrot."

"It's a sort of mesmerism that you practice," said Mr. St. Clair.

Mr. Jansen's dissatisfied smile proved that he did not relish these questions thus publicly put.

"If a man is labouring under delusions," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray, "I should think the putting him under a spell would stop his nonsense whilst under the control of a sane man's will."

"What are they clacking about?" said Mr. Redway, softly.

"We will have nothing to do with them," responded Mrs. Ramsay, as softly, looking upon the plate from which she was eating, as though she was not speaking.

"I was at Buxton last year," said Mr. St. Clair, talking at Mrs. Mowbray whom he disliked, and apparently addressing Mr. Jansen, "and whilst walking was stopped by a madman."

"He had gone to take the waters, I suppose," exclaimed Mrs. Latimer, following up the base insinuation by a noisy laugh.

"He was a gentlemanly man in whites, with large blue eyeballs, and such a hat as milkmen wear in the dog-days," continued Mr. St. Clair, heedless of the interruption, "and, pointing his umbrella to the sky, he said, 'Do you see that hansom cab up there?'"

"He had been reading about Elijah," said Mr. Jansen.

"The absurdities of madness cannot be understood outside the walls of a lunatic asylum," said a passenger named Matthews, who, by virtue of a pair of heavily rimmed spectacles and a certain deaf expression of face,

bore about the same resemblance to Sir Joshua Reynolds that Mr. Redway bore to Charles I.

"Madness," said the mother of two young children, "is the saddest of all human afflictions."

"They don't know it," said Mr. Jansen, snappishly, "and what does your poet say? 'Vere ignorance is bliss, it vas folly to be vise.'"

"You may never have heard, perhaps, Mr. Jansen," exclaimed Dr. Macpherson, "of such things as lucid intervals."

"Look here, doctor," cried the Scandinavian, "in the calm, all is right: the storm has rolled past, though another is coming——"

"But the heavy swell of mental agitation, sir!" exclaimed Dr. Macpherson. "The miserable restlessness of what you call the calm, betwixt the passions of the disease!"

Mrs. Mowbray's eyes were fixed upon Mr. Redway as this discourse proceeded. The captain abruptly said, by way of ending an unpleasant topic, addressing the mother of two young children, "How is your baby's rash, ma'am?"

Three quarters of an hour later the whole of the dinner company were on deck.

CHAPTER XIII

THE *SÉANCE*

THOUGH a very queer ship was lying within eye-shot of the *Crimson Banner* and about three miles out of hail, she failed to detain the attention of the passengers. They were many years nearer to the humbug of planchette, table-turning, and the mysteries of the spiritualism of Quackdom, than we, and credulity was a power in them varying perhaps in degree with the shape of the believer's head. The passage so far was very long and very dull. Anything to break the continuity of that moral girdle which encircled their lives as the sensible horizon compassed their ship. It was to be a *séance*, then, in that second dog-watch, still bright and flushed with the sun sinking cloudless, uncurtained by the gloriously draped pavilions into which the monarch descends in the far north.

The mate had relieved the second mate, who went below to dinner, and the captain from his quarter-deck walk called to the officer who stood at the head of the poop-ladder, and said to him—with a curious expression which was not a smile, nor the twisting of the embarrassed look in the human countenance, but a something sheepish and uncertain, as you shall sometimes see in the face of the sailor who ventures to accost a young lady for the first time after he has been sailing about the ocean for three years without sight of a nymph, save such as those who plunder him—

"I want you to go forward, and find a man willing to be practised upon by Mr. Jansen!"

The mate smiled; he perfectly understood the nature of the proposed programme, yet, to make sure, he desired further directions from his commander.

"How shall I put it, sir?"

"Let them know there is a glass of grog in it," answered the captain, "and you may tell them that it won't hurt them."

"It's a kind of staring job, I believe, sir," said the mate. "Mr. Jansen looks at a man until he doesn't know where he is, and when he's in that state he asks him questions."

"It works out in that way, I believe, sir," responded the captain. "All aft here are waiting for it; find a likely man, if he's to be got, sir!"

The captain walked aft and the mate walked forward. The passengers were variously grouped; Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway side by side in deck-chairs; Mr. St. Clair, in the middle of a small knot, expatiating on the fallacy of mesmerism; Mr. Jansen leaning over the rail alone, viewing the sea directly under him with contracted eyebrows; Mrs. Latimer and Mrs. Mowbray together, talking in subdued voices, close against the open skylight; and so on.

The mate descended the poop-ladder, and, walking a little way forward, halted in the waist and called to the boatswain. This man might have stepped out of one of Cruikshank's pictures of sailors. A big Roman nose sat with the pride of an old Geordie's figurehead betwixt his whiskers, and his eyes were inscrutable in the crimson web where they lay entangled by that cunning and treacherous spider of the sea, the rum-can; his teeth were like the keys of a pianoforte and sharpened into the grinders of a shark by mastication of the

contents of the harness-cask. No boatswain ever blew more sweetly upon the silver pipe that hung around his neck than this man. He saw, by the expression of the mate's face, that some very uncommon job was under way.

"There's a gentleman-passenger," said the mate, "who wants to put a man asleep, and ask him questions whilst he's under the influence of his eyes or his will. It doesn't hurt. Who's a likely man?"

"Is it the same," inquired the boatswain, "as the passing a man's 'ands over a party's eyes, and 'im noddin' and noddin' like a goat in a cabbage-garden till he's right off shore, held fast? If so, I've seen it done, sir."

"Then you know it doesn't hurt," said the mate.

"No more than fallin' asleep 'urts," answered the boatswain.

"Find a man and send him aft!" said the mate. "Let him come clean, and see that he's the best you can get, for ladies will be present; and you may tell 'em that there's a glass of grog in the business."

It was not the hour "when from the boughs the nightingale's high note is heard;" it was the hour of the sailor's lean quotidian festival, dry as a nut-full of dust, cheap as a screw of tobacco. It was, indeed, one of the dog-watches in which the shell-back in those times was privileged to yarn, lounge, smoke, and curse; though each dog had its watch who must spring to their duties at the first yelp from the poop or quarter-deck.

Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway had a full view of the forecastle; they saw that marine stage under the lifted clew of the main-sail, which had else curtained it, even as the boards of a theatre are curtained, had the yards been braced more forward. They had overheard the captain's brief instructions to the mate, and

they watched the boatswain ascend one of the forecastle ladders and gather about him a number of Jack's sea-parlour's company.

"I am convinced," said Mrs. Ramsay, "that the nonsense which is to be rehearsed is Mrs. Mowbray's and Mrs. Latimer's doing."

"What's their motive?" inquired Mr. Redway, admiring out of the functional obliquity produced by his shipwreck, the profile of the lady, as she turned her head to shoot a glance of aversion at the persons she had named.

"What is the motive of most of the ceremonious pranks which old women play? Why will an old woman hint that a girl is unchaste when the wretch knows better?"

"I would sue such a beast, if I were the defamed girl, in one hundred thousand pounds damages!" exclaimed Mr. Redway, lifting his head, and looking at Mrs. Ramsay with the self-exaltation of the insane. "I know an instance"—he was now entering upon a lie. "Lady Louisa Wortley Seymour stated in a full room —I was close to her and overheard the raddled reprobate, with her cockatoo coiffure and shrunken bosom with its line of frill, like the breast-bone of a fowl after it has been carved—I and several others overheard this virulent and incarnate disease of the nobility declare in her deep voice and strong, emphatic way, that the Honourable Mrs. Abraham Anstruther led a life, during her husband's absence, that was better known to the footman, who admitted her *male friends*, than to any other person in this world, including her husband."

"How old was this cockatoo?" asked Mrs. Ramsay, with a curling mouth of disgust, for she was in sympathy with the sufferers from this sort of talk.

"She'll not see seventy again; she was then about

sixty-five. An intimate friend of Anstruther, who was high in the Diplomatic Service, and was filling some lofty official capacity abroad, was amongst those who overheard her ladyship, and he straightway wrote to the man, whose wife's character had been outraged by the poisoned tongue of an adder whose hair was dressed like the tuft of a cockatoo—"

Mrs. Ramsay laughed outright.

"—who forthwith caused his solicitors to address a letter to Lady Wortley Seymour, who, after a brief legal correspondence, was advised to pay five thousand pounds as an antiseptic for the wound she had inflicted."

All this was pure fiction, whether seriously credited by the inventor or not, who shall tell?—for are not we puzzled, and every rational hypothesis frustrated, by this shipwrecked man sincerely, on uttered oath upon oath, dumbly delivered by his heart, believing that he was a close relation of the Duke of St. Albans; that he was the owner of a distant connection's possessions in Wiltshire; and, grimmest of all, that he was a bachelor, with the blood of King Charles I. thick and rich in his veins, through Nell Gwynne by Charles II.?

"I should like to fine Mrs. Mowbray five thousand pounds for every piece of scandal that drops from her withered lips," said Mrs. Ramsay, again turning her head to dart another scorching look at her Colonial sister. "And how pale those lips are, and thin! She is anæmic; they are as gray as her hair under its layer of dye. Has she ever said a word to you about me?"

"She knows her station in life—at least so far as I am concerned," answered Mr. Redway, loftily. "What dare she say about you to me, who am not, as she would speedily find out, destitute of that strictly French art, repartee?"

"I believe she would tell any lie about me, even to you," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"I should say that her amiable qualities are numerous, even to those who scarcely deign to notice her," said Mr. Redway, with a sneer. "You need only tell me that she is a liar—the most detestable of characters, for who was it that asked, 'Do the devils tell lies in hell?' And who was it that answered, 'No, sir; because, if they did, hell could not exist?' You need only tell me she's a liar," continued the madman, scarcely recovering, by the skin of his teeth, the thread of his discourse, "to disgust me into an attitude towards her in which I am afraid I should scarcely know myself."

At this hour it was a glass-calm, and a low, steady, stately heave of swell, that made you think of the tones of a cathedral organ solemnly flooding with sound the rich and splendid figurations of the western windows of the edifice; and the reflection of the sun, a mighty target of palpitating crimson, reposed like a ruby on the breast of the sea. On the bow the strange ship of the afternoon swayed with shocks of shadow in her reddened sails, and as she slewed with the calm, the red ensign was discernible at her mizzen peak, a streak of red, and all that could be told of her then was that she was a British ship.

The boatswain did not keep the passengers long waiting. He was to be seen presently coming aft with a little man at his side; the rest of the crew, a considerable crowd of men, deepened and coloured the break of the forecastle to starboard into an eloquent background for the little trotting figure. When the boatswain and his man arrived at the foot of the starboard poop-ladder, the former exclaimed—

"Up yer go!" and, addressing the mate, who was looking down with a grin, exclaimed, "Here's Bill Barber a-willin' to sit to the foreign gent." And up came Bill.

He was a very short and a very square little man

in his build, and he had dropped through the forecastle to dress himself for the ladies, minding always the injunction of the boatswain, "to bear a 'and." His face was of the colour of ginger: weather and drink had puckered the flesh about his eyes into the aspect of hard ribbed sand. His beard stood from his chin like a coal shovel, his hair sank in dark red curls from under his steamboat cap, the inside of whose peak was painted a vivid green. He wore a rather dirty white flannel jacket, and a rather dirty pair of white flannel trousers, and a coloured shirt which had been washed with a scrubbing brush in the lee scuppers. What he talked through, drank through, and ate through, was a formidable slit without lips, not to be described as a mouth, and as it lay open, owing to an obstruction in the nose which drooped in a tallowy sort of fashion, like a candle in the dog-days, it disclosed three or four fangs whose dye of tobacco did not improve his beauty.

"Come up," said the mate, who thought to himself, "Couldn't the bo'sun have found a likelier man?" He hailed the captain.

"Here's a subject, sir," he cried, and turned his face away, half suffocated with laughter.

"There's your man, sir," called the captain across to Mr. Jansen, who immediately approached the little fellow.

All the passengers rose and came about the two, some of the ladies fanning themselves; Mrs. Mowbray with her eyes bright in contemplation of the issue of this business; one or two of the gentlemen looking on in a sort of hovering way with a smile of incredulity and amusement; but the captain kept aloof, and Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Redway remained seated.

The little sailor did not seem at all disconcerted by the people about him. He glanced at the ladies admiringly,

and even Mrs. Mowbray did not escape the sailorly homage of his extraordinary eyes. Of course he was perfectly sober, but nobody would have liked to take his oath that he was not in liquor. Certainly drink has its memories, which work in the face, though the culprit should have been sober since the day of his sailing.

"Good afternoon," said Mr. Jansen.

"Good afternoon," answered Billy Barber.

"What was your name?" inquired Mr. Jansen, whose English wanted perfection.

The little man spoke it, and stared hard at a good-looking nurse, who, with a child in her arms, was watching the show from the other side of the deck.

"I suppose you have been told," said Mr. Jansen, smiling with a bustle of condescension and benignity in his manner, "why I have asked one of you sailors to come aft here?"

"Yes, I onderstand," answered Barber. "You may tarn to, sir. I'm quite agreeable. Anythink to please the ladies."

And he plucked at his hair under his naval peak and scraped his right foot backwards, a courtesy which raised a laugh forward, for all hands were agreed that Bill was just the man to make fools of the people who lived in the land of knives and forks.

"See that chair?" said Mr. Jansen. "Take and sit in it!"

"Keep me cap on, sir?" inquired Billy.

"Yes, you can keep your cap on," said Mr. Jansen. "Sit down now! and don't be alarmed."

The little man drove a look like the glance of a shark through the Scandinavian's eyeballs. Alarmed! by a bally Dutchman! He hitched up his breeches which were held above his hips by a belt ornamented by a knife and a sheath, and sat down, and the men forward goggled and pressed

upon one another until the foremost stood to break their necks by being shoved over the edge of the forecastle.

"What a nasty little beast to experiment upon," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"I would advise that foreigner not to trouble me," said Mr. Redway, darkly.

The little sailor sat down in a chair just before the standard compass, which stood about a dozen paces from the rim of the raised deck, formerly called the poop, and the passengers stood in a jagged semicircle watching the proceedings; and now, when the man was seated, and Mr. Jansen was about to begin, Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay quitted their chairs and occupied a position which commanded a full view of the business, though they remained apart from the others. The most eager face of them all was Mrs. Mowbray's, the most anxious Mr. Jansen's. The Scandinavian could not fully persuade himself that the man was not under the influence of liquor. If he was in any degree "boozed" his condition might neutralize the "biologizing" power of Mr. Jansen's will, and he dreaded the contempt and derision that must attend failure. He looked hard at the little sailor; the little sailor looked hard at him. Mr. Jansen, after a moment or two, smiled with all the kindness anxiety permitted, and, putting his thumb and forefinger into his waistcoat pocket, extracted a zinc disc of about the size of a five-shilling piece, which he held up as though it were a coin.

"Do you see this?" said Mr. Jansen.

"Course I do," answered the little sailor.

"Keep your eyes fixed upon it!" exclaimed Mr. Jansen, in a note of command.

Bill stared at the disc; all the people stared at him. Silence came down upon the ship, and the stillness was scarcely vexed by the flap of canvas above and the sob of

water alongside. All the men forward strained their eyes like a flock of sheep at a dog. And now began the phenomenon of what once passed as mesmerism, what was afterwards defined as electro-biology, what, perhaps, in these days passes as hypnotism. For at least ten minutes, an intolerable spell of tediousness to the expectant observers, the little sailor was held staring at the disc. Then, even by the superficial spectator, it might be seen that the short, square shell-back in the dirty white flannels had fallen into the condition of a "subject." In short, he looked as he was—in deep reverie, and the will of Mr. Jansen was to create in him the dominating idea that was to produce the wonders, and the operation of that will began thus—

"What is your name?"

"Billy Barber."

"It is not Billy Barber. You are not Billy Barber."

The man's straining face of wonder and perplexity excited some laughter, which was instantly suppressed by an agitated movement of Mr. Jansen's left hand.

"Put your hand on your knee!"

Bill did so, with an infinitely swifter obedience than he would have exhibited had he been under his own control, and receiving the order of an officer.

"You cannot lift your hand off your knee!" said Mr. Jansen, sternly.

The man's sincerity in his efforts to raise his hand was unmistakable; his struggle, the hard, passionate look of his ugly face, were purely natural. It was preposterous to dream of confederacy. If the spectators were tickled by the ludicrous sight they were also very much astonished.

"I have heard of such things," whispered Mrs. Ramsay to Mr. Redway, "but I never saw it done before. Such a mean little wretch, too! He couldn't act the part even if he tried."

She was pale and nervous. Indeed the strain of hysteria in her constitution, though it created for her a charm in men's eyes, was a recurrent form of distress for her in her own.

"I would not subject myself to him for the worth of this ship. Don't be induced to let him make a fool of you."

Mr. Redway frowned at the Scandinavian, but made no reply.

"Clasp your hands on your knee," said Mr. Jansen.

The little sailor instantly obeyed.

"Now you are quite unable to separate them," said Mr. Jansen, who continued to stare at his "subject" with the fixity of a motionless figurehead. The little man struggled; he was transparently helpless; his hands remained glued together, and his efforts to draw them apart, his ugly countenance of wrath and dismay, were so absurd as a picture of enraged imbecile labour that, but for the fear the noise of merriment would break the diverting spell, the spectators would have laughed loud and long. Some turned their heads, and one crammed his handkerchief into his mouth.

Mr. Jansen pulled out a small leather case and extracted a five-pound Bank of England note, which he held close to Billy, who still went on writhing at his hands, and said—

"This note, which you can read is for five pounds, is for you to take; but you cannot grasp it."

The struggle of the little man to unyoke his hands was so strenuous as to contort him into postures of convulsion.

"As you cannot take it," continued Mr. Jansen, after a few moments, during which Captain Buzacott drew close and became a spectator of the scene with lifted eyebrows and enlarged nostrils, "I will keep it."

The Scandinavian coolly replaced the note and pocketed the case.

"And now you will be able to part your clasped hands;" and this the sailor immediately did, with a wild, grinning expression of face that made you think of a panting dog.

"I want a stick," said Mr. Jansen, still severely contemplating his "subject."

"Will the batten of a hencoop do?" said the mate.

"Excellently."

A batten was procured, and placed in the hands of Mr. Jansen, who put it down upon the deck close to the little sailor's feet, and said—

"Stand up,—though you will not be able to do so."

The little wretch tried to rise. He pressed his hands down upon the edges of the chair and with might and main laboured to heave himself on to his feet. It was worse than drawing a tooth whose root has grown into the jaw. He remained immovable, and the saliva of passion and distress, terror and anger, flowed in tobacco-stained froth from the sides of his mouth.

"Yes," said Mr. Jansen, "now I think you will be able to stand up."

As though he were an automaton actuated by electricity the sailor rose, and a hoarse chorus of laughter on the forecastle followed this exploit.

"Now step over this stick, but you'll not be able to move your leg," said Mr. Jansen.

Here the baby in the good-looking nurse's arms uttered a yell. Mr. Jansen angrily motioned to the girl to take the child away. But the little sailor was so sheerly dominated, he was so helplessly and hopelessly under the wizardry of the Scandinavian's will, that had the infant's cry proceeded from a fiend newly arrived from the principality of brimstone, Billy could not have heeded

it less. He could not lift his leg. You saw the limb working like a corkscrew inside the fall of trouser, but the foot remained rooted to the plank.

"That man is the devil," said Mr. Redway, in a low note tremulous with agitation.

"The sailor has been secretly hired to play the part," answered Mrs. Ramsay, a remark which should have been uttered by her companion, for it was false.

"Yes," said Mr. Jansen, "I think you can step over the stick;" and the little sailor with a relaxed face immediately put his foot over the batten.

"Please sit down again," said Mr. Jansen.

The sailor sat down.

"You'll find your seat very uncomfortable," said the remorseless Scandinavian. "It is warm—it is hot—it begins to burn you. But you cannot get up, though your trousers was in flames."

The unhappy little "subject" immediately fell into an agony of squirming. Laughter could not be suppressed. Even Mrs. Ramsay laughed. But Mr. Redway gazed with a forbidding face. He was very uneasy. His functional distemper was growing something feverish under this unholy display of a man's will inducing dominating ideas in perhaps the vulgarest and certainly the most drunken soul in the ship. He was conscious of a sense of alien individuality, which was as though one lobe of the brain was obnoxious to the other and dangerously foreign in imaginations and emotions. Mrs. Ramsay was too intent to observe him, but the manifestations of his soul in his face were visible in the askant eye of Mrs. Mowbray, who muttered in Mrs. Latimer's ear—

"The man is shocked. He'll never allow himself to be made a subject."

"Now," said Mr. Jansen, after suffering the tortured little Billy to wriggle for a whole minute with every

symptom of being broiled in face and attitude. "Your seat grows cool. It is now quite comfortable." And the little man's posture was at once still.

At this point the captain, who had been eagerly watching, beckoned to the doctor, who stood a silent and grave witness of these proceedings.

"What do you think of it, sir?" said Captain Buzacott in a low voice.

"I think it dom'd clever," answered Dr. Macpherson.

"Has the fellow been tipped, do you think, to play the part?" inquired the captain.

"Oh no, it's as genuine as the ring of pure gold," responded the doctor, who as a Scotchman, was a lover of the metaphysical in philosophy.

They were interrupted by Mr. Jansen, who, without removing his eyes from the face of his little "subject," exclaimed—

"Kindly let some one tell the steward to bring me a glass of rum-and-water strong—half-and-half."

It was generally agreed by the spectators afterwards that on Mr. Jansen pronouncing these words Billy had smiled. But any one versed in such matters could have seen that his face of merry expectation was scarce more than a cataleptic grin, if such a thing exists, and that his mirth was excited by the dominating idea of rum-and-water strongly inspired by the will of the man who weirdly held his liquor-soaked reason captive and at his mercy. In the pause that followed nothing was to be heard, outside the fret of waters and the dull thump of becalmed canvas, but a low hum of talk betwixt the captain and the doctor. The strange ship had stolen round on the port quarter owing to the stealthy slewing of the *Crimson Banner* to the thrusting folds of liquid glass, and the sun, vast in magnificence of crimson fire, hung within a few degrees of the horizon.

The steward arrived with a tumbler full of rum-and-water. Mr. Jansen exclaimed, "Take this glass!" and the sailor grasped it.

"But you cannot drink it," said Mr. Jansen.

Bill made horrid mouths at the tumbler, but his arm seemed paralyzed; he could not bring the liquor to his lips.

"You would not like it even if you could taste it," said Mr. Jansen. "It has a most disgusting smell."

The little fellow wrinkled his nose with a face upon him that might have overhung a sewer, and by every manifestation possible confirmed the statement of Mr. Jansen that the smell of the liquor was intolerable.

"No," continued Mr. Jansen, "I am mistaken. The odour of that drink is not disgusting. On the contrary, it is delicious."

The sailor looked immensely pleased.

"It is the smell," continued the Scandinavian, "of the very finest quality of old Jamaica rum mingled with a very little water. But, though you long to take it, you cannot drink it."

It is believed that Mr. Jansen here made a blunder, for, in suggesting that the sailor desired to swallow the drink, he excited a dominant idea which was superior to the paralysis of volition produced by his assertion that the man could not drink it, with the result that the little sailor broke from his control. He began to swear horribly, employing the most hideous expressions of the ship's forecastle; he sprang to his feet, and apparently finding that he could not drink from the glass, he crashed the vessel down upon the deck, shivering it into a thousand splinters of crystal and drops of grog, which flew amongst the recoiling and horrified spectators. He then began to dance about in agonies of rage until the doctor, heedless of the emotions of the passengers, yelled out—

"You have driven him mad!"

The ladies rushed aft; the gentlemen hopped and skipped to keep clear. Mr. Jansen's voice was drowned in the ghastly maledictions of Billy, who, though obviously still under the influence of the hypnotic spell, was unceremoniously seized by the coat-collar by the mate, who rushed him down the poop-ladder, and ran him forward with the velocity of a falling man, kicking him as he went, that he might awaken to the conviction that he was once more a sailor and a responsible individual.

The captain walked up to Mr. Jansen.

"There shall be no more scenes of this kind aboard this ship!" he exclaimed, with blood in his face and blood in his tone.

"But you saw that he could not lift his hand to his mouth, though he dashed the glass to the deck," cried the Scandinavian, with irrelevant glee, casting his eyes upon an under-steward who was mopping up the mess the sailor had left.

"I don't care about that," said Captain Buzacott, with great heat. "This poop is not to be converted into a back-alley slum. The feelings of the ladies are outraged. There shall be no more sciences, sir, as you call them;" and he stamped his foot and folded his arms and frowned at the doctor, his underlip pursed.

"How did I know that the dirty little sailor would swear?" exclaimed Mr. Jansen, with a sudden show of warmth. "He was of your finding. All was *bonâ fide.* Could I predict that he would defy Gott and shock the ladies?"

"We will have no more of it, sir!" said the captain, in a voice loud with command; and there was scarce a person on board that did not hear that order.

"It was a most unseemly exhibition," said Dr. Macpherson,

"Shall I try you privately?" sneered Mr. Jansen. "But, then, I hope you do not swear, toctor!"

And with a light smile that was very nearly a frown of vexation, Mr. Jansen rounded on his heel and went below.

The great red sun sank; out of the east came the goddess Night with the evening star jewelling her breast, and trailing skirts of violet dye, flashful with rising brilliance as she stealthily came along, moist, sweet, and serene. The strange ship faded into a phantom, and waved her dim wings upon the swell like some huge sea-fowl essaying to rise upon its webbed feet. The passengers stood about in knots, talking over the horrid *dénouement* of what, until the first of the bad language, had been exquisite comedy, whose refinement did not militate against its quality of preternaturalism. Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer walked the deck together.

"It will not be repeated," said Mrs. Mowbray, in a low tone of disappointment.

"Whether or not, I don't think you'd ever get him to sit as a subject," said Mrs. Latimer. "He is too well watched."

"She wants to be disabused. The daughter of a convict with such airs and aspirations!" snarled Mrs. Mowbray.

"You'll never disabuse her, even though he should pull the long-bow to the extent you think he does," said Mrs. Latimer. "She is of that sort whose expectations demand deceit. She wants social position. She does not want money. Here is a man who proclaims himself closely akin with the great English duke in whose veins runs the blood royal of the old country. All that he says may be true, all that you may say, all that you may attempt through others, will not succeed in convincing her that the thing that she wishes to be true is not true. You have her

whole ambitious nature against you, and she will marry the man on his own merits, and if I were you I would not trouble my head any more about her, but wait until the whirligig of time shall bring his revenges."

This was very cleverly reasoned, and what was best in it was its truth. For it is our hope that things should be as we prayerfully desire them to be that fills the world with credulities and superstitions, and Mr. Redway is not the only liar who has kept people devout and happy until a little pillow of earth has held them down in silence and in cold obstruction under "seals of clay," to quote Mr. Ruskin's expression.

CHAPTER XIV

CAPTAIN SKULL OF THE *SKELETON*

WHEN the earliest of the passengers of the *Crimson Banner* quitted their berths for the deck next morning, they were astonished and delighted with one of the most shining, beautiful and fairylike pictures which ever struck the light of its loveliness into the heart of the deep sea. The ship of yesterday lay this morning within a few strokes of the oars of a boat: not so close as to hint a danger, and not so distant but that some figures might be seen walking on the castellated crown of her stern, their faces almost distinguishable by the naked sight, and the vessel herself as sharp and clean-cut as a Chinese painting, as she slowly waved the soft whiteness of her drapery upon the profound calm, along which the flaming eye of the rising sun was levelling the first of its splendid silver beams.

A most wonderful and incomparable craft indeed! The like of which, afloat, manned, and with clews stretching to the yardarms, could never have entered into the wildest imaginations of the oldest hand aboard the Australian liner. She was literally coated with shells which glowed in scores of hues and delicate shadings of tints as she sparkled like a prism—ever flashful with the movements imparted by the long-drawn, scarcely-sensible suspirations of the ocean. Her shape was that of a ship of the eighteenth century: a long beak, curling headboards, a sheer aft that ran into a preposterously lofty

stern, decorated by a poop, and a top-gallant poop, from the latter of which fell a short length of steps, while a second similar flight of ladder conducted to the quarter or main deck. She carried three masts: one stepped right forward in the fore peak, and the main mast well amidships, and a short pole mizzen-mast, and athwart it lay a gaff or yard, upon which a lateen or triangular sail was furled. If ever she had been pierced for gun ports or for windows, the orifices had been hermetically closed by encrustration of shell, and she floated like a fossil, and might have been copied from a toy ship formed of shells, like to those shell-sheathed ornaments you sometimes meet with—chiefly at seaside lodgings—upon the mantelpiece.

The sailors of the *Crimson Banner* could scarcely wash the decks down for staring at her. News of her was taken below, and in a very short time nearly all the passengers were on deck, with Captain Buzacott standing on the end of a hencoop holding on by a mizzen vang, whilst he lifted a speaking-trumpet to his mouth, for in 1860 the speaking-trumpet was still an appurtenance of the captain's fittings; ships in those days still backed their topsails to speak to one another, and conversation was carried on in the voice of ogres in a pantomime.

What was the rig of that ship? How was she to be hailed? Buzacott must take refuge in the Act of Parliament which provides that a ship is anything afloat which is not propelled by oars. She showed no colours: the mizzen peak of the *Crimson Banner* was almost dumb.

"Oh, the ship ahoy!" shouted the little withered skipper through his trumpet.

"Hillo! hillo!" came faintly back from one of the visible figures on the top-gallant poop. His throat might have been sore; he might have had a cold, his note was hoarse and dim.

"Are they spectres or men?" said Mrs. Ramsay, who,

on passing through the companion-way and seeing Mr. Redway staring at the stranger, had stepped, with the easy privilege of a sweetheart, to his side. "See! There are more of them in the front of the ship"—meaning the forecastle.

How well, and smart, and fair she looked in that pink light of the morning, with her feather-light hat, the gladness of health in her cheeks, like the reflection of a rose in water, the bronze of her hair deepened in tone by the steady gush of Eastern splendour, and each of her melting brown eyes lustrous with the morning star kindled in them by the risen day beam. And Mr. Redway! His face made a gallant and even a noble show. By those who thought him royal, he must have looked royal; but the Count's coat did not suit him. And the slop breeches, by shrinkage had ceased to fit him, and his feet were unreasonably enlarged to the proportion-loving eye, by undue exhibition of shoe and sock. But all the same he looked a gentleman, and he stood with dignity, and when the lady was at his side he turned and received her with a courtesy which Lord Chesterfield could not have improved upon, in the most polished recommendations to his son, as to grace in bearing, and in reverential loftiness of demeanour to ladies.

"What ship is that, and where are you from?" thundered Buzacott through his trumpet.

The figure, whose voice was faint with hoarseness, was wise not to exert his pipes again: he delivered the office to another, who yelled, one hand edge-wise at his mouth—

"We are the ship *Skeleton*—Skull, master—of and from Port Nolloth for London, seventy-eight days out."

"Every skeleton should be commanded by a skull," exclaimed Mrs. Mowbray, in tones audible to all who were aft.

"And every skeleton would have its cupboard if that creature had her way," said Mrs. Ramsay, softly, to Mr. Redway.

A ship named the *Skeleton*, commanded by a man named Skull! Captain Buzacott, who was viewing the extraordinary craft with the sensations which probably possess a bull dog at sight of a poodle with its tufted rope's-end of tail, and its rings of remnant hair, concluded that the people on board that fossil of a boat, desired to make a fool of him in the presence of his passengers. So without ado, without even a deprecatory flourish of his trumpet, he dropped from the hencoop, and turned a deaf ear to the distant shout of "What ship are you, and where are you bound to?"

The passengers were disappointed. Here was a wonderful break in the intolerable routine of the voyage, and nothing was to be made of it.

"I wish, captain," said one of the gentlemen, "that you would send those of us who are willing in a boat to inspect that ship. There is something so unearthly about her that I would give ten pounds to visit her."

Mr. Jansen and another backed this proposal.

"I believe they are lowering a boat," exclaimed a lady.

Buzacott looked. It was to be seen with the naked sight that a small boat was being launched through an aperture in the shell-sheathed side of the stranger, as they launch boats from sailing-smacks. The tub tumbled with a plash into the water, and three figures fell through the aperture into her, and in a minute or so the boat was approaching with windmill grace, and came alongside the *Crimson Banner*. The man who had occupied the stern-sheets of the boat, scrambled aboard, and stepped, with the rolling motion of an old salt, up the port poop-ladder. There was nothing very remarkable in him. He wore a

weather-worn straw hat, and his suit of tweed was also weather-worn. He was bearded, and his eyes were deep-set and blue, and the eyebrows and eyelashes like golden silk, and he wore gold hoops in his ears. He was as modern as the most modern of the passengers who gathered about him.

"Are you the capt'n, sir?" he said, in the hoarse voice of a man who has a cold on his chest.

"Captain Buzacott, at your service, sir," answered the little skipper, as pompous as an admiral giving an order to a commander.

"I beg pardon for taking the liberty of coming aboard," said the man; "but, though you're outward bound, I expect you'll get home to England before I do, and I should be glad to be reported in London, and likewise at Cape Town, if you touch at that port."

"Which we do not," exclaimed Captain Buzacott.

"Well, my name is Skull—Captain Skull at *your* service," said the man; "and I am in charge of that ship, the *Skeleton*."

He cast his eyes over the faces of the bystanders with a smile.

"What's your real name?" asked Buzacott, who was slow in his arrivals at points of humour.

"Skull, sir!" answered the man, changing his face, and uttering the grim word with emphasis. "My father was a Skull before I was born."

"And was that his skeleton you are in command of?" exclaimed Mr. Jansen, making a bid for a laugh.

"What about that ship, sir?" said Captain Buzacott, sternly, in suppression of a vein of waggery which alarmed him.

"My terms are a guinea a head for inspection," was Captain Skull's answer. "We've picked up ten guineas, so fur."

"What's her meaning?" demanded Buzacott. "Why is she sheathed in shells?"

"We rose her out of a creek near Port Nolloth," responded Captain Skull. "She lay in seven fathom. A Kaffir gave the news of her in Cape Town, and Mr. Paul Solomons and David Jenkins, hesquire, and two other gents, all a-rolling in money, combined to send a diver to search her for treasure. He found none; but they thought her a treasure for her shape in shells, and hellected to raise her at a *con*-siderable expense, which was done, and she was towed to Cape Town and docked, and now's going to London for a show under my command. A guinea a-piece on the 'igh sea, and well worth it. But at 'ome, 'alf-a-crown and one shilling, according to the hour, to keep social parties asunder."

"What's your cargo?" said Captain Buzacott, after the hum of surprise, which this strange story excited, had ceased.

"Timber and skeletons," answered Captain Skull.

"'Orrible!" exclaimed a sweat-slobbered man, who had made a fortune out of canteens, and on this hot morning looked to reek more than one blend of liquors in his brow and throat.

"Timber to float on, of course," said Captain Buzacott, making the suggestion not for his own, but for the edification of the listeners, whose good humour and pleasure it was his business to cultivate and improve.

"Four lighters wouldn't keep her afloat," replied Captain Skull. "Them shells are as ponderous as a line-of-battle ship's plating, but she keeps alive with her hatchways flush with timber, ay, and valuable timber."

"And where d'ye stow your skeletons?" inquired Buzacott.

"They're away down aft, all to be viewed along with the marvellous ship herself for one guinea a 'ead."

"I'll pay a guinea and go, if you'll tell me that one of those skeletons can play the fiddle," said Mrs. Mowbray; which extraordinary remark caused nearly every eye to turn on Mr. Redway.

Mrs. Ramsay darted a look of scorn at the acid, Colonial lady; and the lordly figure beside her stared at the prismatic ship with a look vacant with simulated deafness.

"I'll engage," said Captain Skull, grinning, "that there's one of my skeletons that in his day could have played the fiddle fit for the first music-'all now being run. And I'm sure, m'am," he continued, addressing Mrs. Mowbray, "that so charming a lady as you need but smile upon him to start his elbow into life, if, so be, I may carry a fiddle aboard, as we haven't one."

Mrs. Mowbray squirmed in silence, not so much at the remark as at Mrs. Ramsay's laugh, which was more a meaningless shriek than hilarity.

"There's no room in that boat," exclaimed Mr. Jansen, looking over the side at the tub under the mizzen channels. "I'll go, for one; and here's my guinea." He pulled out his purse. "Will you lend us a boat, captain?"

"Oh yes, oh yes," answered Buzacott, sulkily, with no good liking for the man whose blundersome art had filled the atmosphere of the poop with the forecastle blasphemies of a dirty little sailor. "But ladies and gentlemen, who among you are willing to pay a guinea to view a skeleton?"

"More'n one, capt'n, more'n one," chucked in Captain Skull; "and a dirt-cheap show at a guinea, takin' it all round."

"I'll join you, Mr. Jansen," said Mr. Matthews, feeling in his waistcoat-pocket.

"And I," exclaimed Mr. St. Clair.

"The cheapest show afloat," chimed Captain Skull, in the note of a dirge, gazing with approval and expectation around at the faces of the people.

"Would you like to go?" said Mrs. Ramsay, in a low voice to Mr. Redway.

The unfortunate man was visibly excited, and appeared ardent to go; but the instincts of the gentleman were dominant; he had no money. Mrs. Ramsay saw how it was, and her wit leapt to the rescue. She drew forth her purse and handed Captain Skull a sovereign and a half-crown, asking for the change, and saying, "I'll go."

"You'll never forget it, ma'am," said the captain of the shell-clothed ship, weighing out of a tight trousers pocket, a long, lean, leather bag, ball-shaped at the end. Out of this ball he drew eighteen pence, which he handed to Mrs. Ramsay.

"A nice study for ladies!" sneered Mrs. Mowbray, audibly, with a wrinkled nose, and she walked a little way off in seeming disgust.

"At all events," said Mrs. Ramsay, "I'll go if you'll accompany me, Mrs. Latimer."

"Not I, indeed," cried the lady, with an affected shudder. "Skeletons! Have we not enough of such things in our ancestors?" she added, with an arch look in the direction of Mr. Redway.

"Finest show afloat! And most enriching to the understanding," said Captain Skull, staring earnestly at Mrs. Latimer. "As fit for ladies as for innocent sucklings, with a beautiful moral to be drawn from the whole."

A general pause followed this remark. No one else offered a guinea.

Mrs. Ramsay exclaimed, "I decline to be the only lady!"

"But why, ma'am?" cried Captain Skull, starting. "There's nothing to hurt ye."

"Will you take my place, Mr. Beauclerk?" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, turning, with the swiftness and brilliance of the stroke of the wing of a pearl and scarlet and green Australian bird, upon her admirer and the lord of her heart.

The delicacy of the ruse was appreciated by all but Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer.

"You are extremely kind," said Mr. Redway; "but I shall be depriving you of the sight of a memorable exhibition."

"I could not dream of being the only woman," she answered coquettishly, backing away a step or two. "It is my wish, Mr. Beauclerk, and you'll go to oblige me."

Probably Charles I. never bowed to his queen (in the presence of witnesses) with finer and loftier grace than did this soul-distempered man to Mrs. Ramsay, and even Captain Skull looked impressed, and surveyed the gentleman's face—with its Jacobean mustache and beard, its handsomely shaped nose, and eyes filled with the decisive light of a brain that, being radically wrong in its perceptions, counted itself irrefragably right in its conclusions—with unaffected interest and even admiration—a gaze not lost, at all events, upon Mrs. Ramsay.

"Suppose we wait till after breakfast," said Mr. St. Clair.

"It may come on to blow a breeze of wind," said Captain Skull; "and there's nothing in skeletons that's goin' to make your capt'n keep his topsail aback."

He sought little Buzacott's eye for approval.

"You had better go at once, gentlemen, if you wish to go," said the commander of the *Crimson Banner*.

He hailed the mate and told him to get the after-port quarter-boat manned and lowered.

The mate was about to sing out when he was addressed from the quarter-deck by the dirty little sailor, who had been made a "subject" of on the previous evening by Mr. Jansen. The watch on deck were washing down, and the boatswain was filling the air with the outcry of instructions, whilst he pointed the hose's brilliant line of water, foaming along the decks, against the bulwarks, under the long boat, wherever dirt was to be dreamt of. Billy Barber, blinking like a half-roused cat under the sweating burden of an old yellow sou'wester, looked up at the mate and called out—

"May I 'ave that glass of grog that I was prevented from drinking last evening, sir?"

"Get on with your work! Get on with your work!" shouted the mate. And he then bawled to some hands to lay aft and man the quarter-boat as directed by the captain.

"There was a five-pun note too," sung up Billy, in a note of mutiny. "Ain't that to come to me for allowing myself to be made a blooming fool of?"

"Bo'sun, turn this man to!" bawled the mate, growing red in the face.

"Give the poor beggar his grog!" exclaimed an irresponsible Colonial.

The boatswain yelled at Billy. Some of the watch flung down their cleaning tools and came up the poop-ladder to the boat's falls. Whilst they were clearing away the boat's gripes, making ready to lower her into the water alongside, Billy, heedless of the yelps of the boatswain and the turkey-cock scowl of the mate, continued to appeal for his money and his grog.

"'Aint I to 'ave my roights? Why, I nearly died last night arter the performance. Blistered if I do another stroke of work till I gets my money and that 'lowance of drink. Why, I was as sick as a dog arter it; kicked

too, unbeknowing where I was, and sunk right down in the hestimation of my shipmates"—this was a bid for the sympathy of some male and female passengers who had drawn to the rail to listen and look—"and no retarn! Clothin' myself to please the ladies—sick as a dog, too, as I says——"

Here he was seized by the boatswain, who gripped the little outcast by the scruff of his neck with one hand, whilst from the other, the end of the hose continued to spout its long, sparkling jet of brine, flashing into a fountain of froth where it smote plank or stanchion, or coaming, or obstruction. The boatswain was a man of leviathan proportions; his arms were as thick as thighs, and sinew and muscle ran through them in knotted outlines like wire rigging full of kinks. In an instant Billy Barber was silenced and helpless, and in another instant he was speeding forwards, mainly impelled by a tremendous kick, but helped also by the fury of the spurting water, which, from the hose in the boatswain's hands, dexterously hung its cloud of froth betwixt the humped shoulder-blades of the speeding figure.

By this time the boat was ready. Two hands were in her, and others waiting to lower away. The second mate, whose watch would come round shortly, had been called to take charge of the boat. He stood at the rail in the moment's pause that followed his arrival. One of the men in the boat exclaimed—

"Us men who are told off for this job 'ud like to know if the gent as cast Billy into a trance last evening is one of the party that's to visit that ship!"

The mate, overhearing this, called out, "Yes, lower away handsomely!"

"We refuse to pull him," said the man, folding his arms, and standing erect in the stern-sheets. And the

others at the falls made no movement in the direction of "lowering away handsomely."

"Lower away! lower away!" cried the captain, in a voice that squeaked with impetuosity and temper.

"Not if the Dutch gentleman's a-going, sir," was the firmly delivered answer. "We ain't all Billy Barbers, and we don't trust him."

Some of the passengers broke into a laugh, and the heartiest of the laughter broke from the lips of Mr. Jansen.

"What are you afraid of?" he asked, approaching the boat, that hung dangling, and slightly swaying with the heave, between its davits.

"We don't want nothing to say to you, sir," answered the man in the boat, with a dangerous look at the Scandinavian. "We don't understand neither you nor what's in yer. And we don't pull you, if so be as you're to be a passenger."

"Give me back my guinea!" said Mr. Jansen, turning upon Captain Skull.

"Get out!" cried the master of the prismatic ship. "He's only chaffing. Look 'ere, matey"—now he addressed the man in the boat—"there's a glass of grog apiece for ye aboard my ship."

"No, you don't; no, you don't," bawled Captain Buzacott, rushing across the deck. "They get grog enough here. Bear a hand now, and lower away handsomely."

"Not if that gent's to make one of them," exclaimed one of the sailors who stood at the boat's falls.

"I'm not going, I tell you," roared Mr. Jansen.

"I'll take your place," cried the irresponsible Colonial.

"I'll not send a boat at all, if you don't bear a hand with this job, Captain Skull," cried Buzacott, almost speechless with helpless indignation.

"In with you. In with you, gentlemen!" halloaed Captain Skull, making a short rush to the quarter-boat. "Such a sight as you're going to see you'll never forget."

And in a few minutes the two boats were pulling to the shelly apparition which was now right astern. Skull stuck to his own little tub. In the other boat were the second mate at the tiller, Mr. Redway and the other visitors, and four seamen at the oars. Save but for the undulations of swell, the ocean was as glass, clear and smooth as a reach of translucent summer river, in whose breast the tall trees sink inverted, motionless save when now and again a leaping fish sends a tremor of circles through the lovely tranquillity.

"Is your name Skull in good earnest?" shouted the irresponsible Colonial to the captain of the encrusted ship, whose boat was pulling abreast within a few lengths.

"Course not," was the answer. "But don't go and say so, gentlemen. It was the wish of the syndicate that I should change my name, *pro tem.*, as the tarm is, and it was them who found the money to christen the ship."

"It is a wonderful sight, certainly," said Mr. Redway, gazing with curious and perhaps uncalled-for fervour at the remarkable fabric that floated ahead of the boat. "But I have seen a more amazing object yet."

"In what, sir?" inquired Mr. St. Clair, with a suspicion of sarcasm and a sneer in his voice.

"In a voyage I made to Calcutta, some years ago," answered Mr. Redway, pigeon-breasting his bosom with a lofty pose of head that made his whole bearing a condescension.

This was an egregious lie; he had never been to Calcutta in all his born days.

"What did you see?" inquired Mr. Matthews.

"A Viking ship under full sail, manned by twenty-two oars, each worked by a man in the costume of the period."

"A genuine dug-out Viking ship?" inquired the irresponsible Colonial.

"The steamer was stopped to hail her," continued the liar, "and they stopped rowing and threw their boat into the wind, and her captain told us in Danish that she was from Copenhagen bound to Boston, and that their average speed, when the wind helped the oars, was thirteen knots."

No time was allowed to cross-examine Mr. Redway on this statement. The boat was fast closing the floating wonder, and every eye was constrained to inspect it. Her shape, though as clearly defined as ever it could have been in the day when she was launched, was clad in a very magnificence of coloured shells, blue, green, purple, shot like that old-fashioned material called moire-antique; shot, too, with an infinite variety of tints, comparable to the daguerrotype when the plate is swiftly shifted to the light. Her shape indicated a fossil-growth of at least two centuries, and the goddess of the fathoms, in whose green halls she had lain all that time, had decked her and decorated her as never had human handiwork been embellished before. The light which she sank into the water under her—that light which was her shadow or reflection—was charged with swimming, lustrous hues, and no prism of her bulk could have glorified the sea with more freshness and splendour of rainbow, with softer, purer, lovelier effect than did this ancient, shell-clad craft, whose motions on the subtle, long-drawn heave, drove throngs of whispers, like memory speaking from her hold, into the white canvas that scarcely breathed as it carried the eye aloft.

The boats arrived alongside. A ladder had been hung

from the aperture in the bulwarks called the gangway, but the steps were fended off by short spokes of wood that the shells might be preserved from being chipped or detached. The visitors stayed a few minutes alongside to admire the wonderful picture that was like the inside of a grotto, but radiant as the glorious sunbeam in the east alone could make it. No man in that slender company of spectators knew anything about shells, but all were agreed that none could imagine such a sight possible if it had not been seen so as to be sworn to.

They gained the deck, and three of the *Crimson Banner's* men were summoned on board by the second mate, leaving one to watch the boat. The decks were as remarkable as the sides. The seams of the planks were entirely concealed by marine adhesions as hard as concrete, and as multitudinous in coloured sparklings as a jeweller's window. The front of the poop, midway whose deck was perched another raised structure called by the ancient seafarer the topgallant-poop, was a magnificent presentment of shells in curves, like the inside brickwork of a railway arch, crossing the roadway or land transversely, and a token that the hulk, when she foundered, had reposed on the ooze on her port bilge, which was as chubby as a prize baby's cheek. You found further natural and gracious decorations and hangings in pendulous-looking, but firmly fixed, fringes of coral hardness of various tints, all lovely, nay, even gorgeous, in the light of the day, and entrancing the eye with the effect of a royal galaxy in a garden, glorious with chosen flowers of imperial hue. A few prosaic details scarcely disturbed the impression produced by this glittering show of a sumptuously decorated ship of old times. A big long boat was stowed amidships, and a bit of a galley had been knocked together and seized to the deck; this caboose might have been of the size of two sentry boxes, and just abaft the break of the

forecastle deck—this deck itself being scarce a fathom long—stood a strong, rude house for the accommodation of the sailors, of whom five could be counted lounging over the encrusted bulwarks, though when the men of the *Crimson Banner* came aboard, these seamen of the *Skeleton* advanced to receive them, and seemed to make much of them, and carried them into the deckhouse where one of them, who was a Russian Fin, produced a bottle of rum, which he had saved up out of his allowance; and so the sailors were lost sight of; for it was consistent with the traditions of the shell-back, as the mariner is termed, that these men of both ships should rather sit in a sailors' parlour and drink rum-and-water in pannikins and smoke plug tobacco, than admire nature's art as an embellisher of foundered fabrics, or moralize, like Hervey among the tombstones, over the skeleton relics in the "great cabbin." But our interest and our business lie aft.

"Mr. Quinton," said Captain Skull, addressing a lean, long Yankee-looking fellow, with a red fall of goatee dangling at his chin, and no other hair upon his face but his eyebrows, "tell the boy to bring up some brandy and a box of cigars."

"Not for me, thank you," said Mr. Redway, immediately. "I never smoke or touch spirits on an empty stomach."

"Nor for me," said the Irresponsible, whose name I forget.

"Nor me," chimed in Mr. Matthews, like a church bell seconding another.

"Then, Mr. Quinton," said Captain Skull, "keep all fast with the brandy and cigars. The mate, gentlemen," said he introducing Mr. Quinton.

"The only mate," exclaimed Mr. Quinton; "which for a syndicate wallowing in opulence I count mean."

"So!" said Captain Skull, soothingly. "But so far

we've weathered it out and made some friends, which don't always happen as you march along the dusty highway of life ashore."

"A very truthful remark, Captain Skull," said Mr. Redway. "I, who have been shipwrecked, know the value of friends in the time of need, and they are to be met at sea, when often they are not to be met on shore."

He looked grandly and smiled loftily, and both Skull and Quinton ran their eyes over his slop trousers and French coat and Caroline face with some tokens of respect, and several marks of wonder and interest. But the gents had come to see the ship, and had paid a guinea ahead, and at any moment a breeze of wind might spring up. Skull led the way to the topgallant poop whence they commanded a fine view of the extraordinary structure betwixt her outlines. Here were a brightly cleaned skylight and a small, entirely modern binnacle-stand, but the wheel was down on the quarter-deck, and the tiller was governed by ropes. The masts were new, and so were the yards, but the rig of the ship at the time she foundered, as conjectured, had been closely imitated, and she showed nothing above her topgallant-sails, whilst her tops were round and immense in proportion, and the fore and main shrouds were complicated abaft by cat-harpings. So that, on the whole, she looked as ancient above as she was miraculous as a festal marine effort below.

"How d'ye manage to drive that swelled head through it, captain?" said Mr. Matthews.

"Oh, she lips it up in cream, sir," was Skull's reply. "The old mother spoons her milk into this babe's mouth as I've seen a nurse feeding an infant, and her wake in a wind goes away on the quarter, and her log gives us seven to a hurricane right aft."

Mr. Quinton's slow smile reminded you of a Scotchman

"takin' a thoct;" it remained fixed as a conviction for some time. Mr. Matthews viewed Skull as a man of rude poetry and natural eloquence, and Mr. Redway asked to see the skeletons.

"You're kept afloat by timber, I believe," said the Irresponsible.

"Chock ablock, a regular bed of it," answered Skull.

"How got you men for this oyster bug?" inquired Mr. Matthews.

"I showed 'em good money in dollars," was the answer. "How got I men? How gets they men for the naval stoke'old where 'tis worse than hell? for old Nick does his work well, *his* boilers don't burst, *his* pipes don't give out."

This was expressed with so much vehemence, and so wild a play of face, that one might have conjectured that Skull himself was related to the engine-room, that if he hadn't a brother who was an artificer, he had sweated in a hundred and eighty degrees as a stoker himself.

"The skeletons!" exclaimed Mr. Redway, with the utterance of an Othello muttering, "The handkerchief!"

"This way, gents," said Captain Skull, with an abrupt change of face, recollecting the showman's business.

And the party went down on to the quarter-deck, and passed into the "Great Cabbin" through a swinging door, which was as richly coated as the ship's sides with strange and beautiful growths of the creek's ooze. It was rather dark inside here, despite the illumination of the skylight and of two windows in the cabin-front, one on either hand the door. A round table, black as ebony, apparently through petrification, and perhaps older than the ship herself, was fixed in the middle of the cabin-deck; and on stools, modern but made to assimilate with the table, were seated, some with bent knee joints, and some with straight thigh and shin

bones, six skeletons with skulls complete, and their postures were various and awful. One leaned his skull upon his skeleton elbow and looked lost in thought. Another lay a little back with his skeleton hands clutching the table, as though a fit of laughter had taken him, and the grinful of teeth in the skull that topped that dreadful shape, made real to perception the horrid mirth that seemed to pour from the cavity. Three others sat upright; the sixth leaned across, as though whispering to the skeleton over against him. The walls of this interior were like a vast mosaic with shells, and encrustations for which I have no names. It was like some Dantesque dream of a submarine sepulchre for drowned sailors, from whose bones the chemical action of salt water or the famine of entombed fish had stripped the raiment and then the flesh.

Captain Skull entered cheerfully, but the four visitors, when they caught a sight of the ghastly inhabitants of this shell-sheathed timber compartment, recoiled as one man, as though they were four marines simultaneously falling back a step at the command of an officer.

"My God! what a sight!" gasped Mr. Matthews.

The Irresponsible breathed hard, and pulled his cap off to wipe his brow. Mr. Redway stared, with a frown that to a medical eye might have served as the prognosis of a profound intellectual revolution. Mr. St. Clair gazed as though under the influence of Mr. Jansen.

"What are they?" asked Mr. Redway, in a voice compared to which the raven's that was hoarse was as sweet as the music of the moon contained in the plain egg of the nightingale.

"Dead men's ribs and angle-irons," answered Captain Skull. "The frames of things which, when clothed like you and me, sir, walked about, some doing good and some doing 'arm, making love, cheating, fightin', telling

lies, struggling for situations in life for which they're not entitled, and ending as you see." With a bland gesture, he drew forth a case of cigars, and said, "Gents, you'll find tobacco relishes down here. The scent fills the nose with an atmosphere through which the eye sees things in their true light."

"Put them up!" said Mr. Matthews, sternly. "They make me feel ill."

"Not on an empty stomach, thank you," exclaimed the Irresponsible, shaking his head, with a face whose pallor was accentuated by the strange light.

Mr. Redway waved away the cigar-case with a lordly gesture of the hand. Mr. St. Clair seemed deaf. Skull pocketed the tobacco.

"Do you mean to say that you found them in that attitude, sitting round the table?" inquired Mr. Matthews.

"No, sir. The remains were hove up lying about. They were fixed as you see 'em by a gentleman who knows all about old bones, under the direction of the Syndicate."

"And this is to prove an attraction in England!" said Mr. St. Clair, breaking from his trance.

"Nothing else will be in it compared with us, when we get there," answered Skull.

"And they were men!" said Mr. Redway, softly, as though talking to himself. A shiver ran through him, and, preserving the same low voice, he droned out—

> "To die, and go we know not where!
> To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
> This sensible warm motion to become
> A kneaded clod."

He rolled his eyes to the upper deck, till nothing but the whites were visible. Again he looked at the hideous party assembled round that table, but it was clear, from the varying expressions of his face, that no impulse useful

to the restoration of sanity was likely to visit him. And, indeed, what was there in such a sight to touch the chord of rational memory, to recall to him his identity, to reveal to him the possession of a wife, and the knowledge that, though the blood of the Charleses ran in a very faint vein indeed in his blood, he was, in verity, so distantly connected with the house of St. Alban's, that he had as lief bragged of those skeletons as relations?

CHAPTER XV

MRS. RAMSAY SPEAKS UP

I've had enough of this," exclaimed Mr. Redway, in the manner of a sudden gust of passion. And he walked out of the "Great Cabbin." The skeletons did not relax their grin when he went.

He was promptly followed by the others. There was not a man of the four who would have stayed for five minutes alone with those appalling reminders of human mortality for the value of one year's takings by the ship as a show. Captain Skull pursued them rather sulkily. He was disappointed. He had not expected that the grim spectacle he commanded would prove terrifying and depressing to guinea visitors. So far, his one or two experiences in this way, on the high seas, had been encouraging.

They stood on the quarter-deck, and with them were the second mate of the *Crimson Banner* and Mr. Quinton The second mate had been smoking a pipe (which he now pocketed) whilst he endeavoured to persuade the only mate that his ship was not necessarily a barque because she carried a mizzen.

"It's upset my stomach," said the Irresponsible, laying his hand upon his waistcoat. "No breakfast for me, that's cocksure."

He looked as he had looked when, in the Channel, he had been grateful for the services of the steward.

"You'll not get ladies to visit you," said Mr. Matthews.

"Don't you make no mistake," said Captain Skull in a voice warm with protest. "It's ladies who relish this sort of thing. They like to study man when he's ceased to be a dandy. They like books about men and women which men themselves don't like, and which women write, God bless 'em. I expect Royal patronage for this show, and the Duchess 'ull take to it as kindly as Sairey as steps aboard on the arm of 'Arry."

The second mate began to call for his men, who were enjoying themselves in the sailors' house forward. They came out, and were followed by the crew of the fossil, two of whom were dusky Africanders with hair like black wool mats.

"I don't think you'll get much encouragement from the British aristocracy," said Mr. Redway, with a lofty sneer. "It's a pitiful sight. The remains of the humblest pauper are sacred, and should be reverently concealed. This ship is as beautiful as a rose; why do you plant the canker death in her heart?"

His dignified mien and the expression of self-exaltation which irradiated his gaze awed Captain Skull, who in a modest note rejoined—

"This ship was a pirate, and those skeletons in their day was pirates, who'd make no more of cutting your throat than of lighting their pipes. They hanged 'em, cut 'em down, coated 'em with pitch, hung 'em up again in irons, and called the job respect for mortal remains."

He turned his head away to spit—an expressive manœuvre when an irritated sailor is the tactician.

"In with you, my lads!" bawled the second mate.

The boat was got alongside, everybody who belonged to her entered, and away they went with two or three in

the stern-sheets lifting their caps to Captain Skull, who stood in dogged pose in the aperture in the beshelled bulwarks.

"Those shapes will haunt my dreams," said the Irresponsible.

"The boiling 'ull be dead broke in a month if ever it reaches home," said the second mate. "Who'd pay a guinea to view an old ship covered with barnacles and sea trinkets, and freighted with a circle of old bones?" for, though he had not entered the cabin, he had obtained a view of the black table and the guests around it through the skylight. "There's ships from round the Horn in dry dock worth more seeing in good money for the sake of the sailors that have outweathered them, than ten thousand of the like of that oystershell, with dead men's grins for a cargo and flush to the hatches with timber to keep it washing along."

Two or three comments on this speech brought the boat to the gangway of the *Crimson Banner*.

The calm was the trance of the dreamer, and the delicate pulse of swell scarcely denoted the beating of the deep heart. From the heights fell the noise of muttering canvas vexed in desire of repose; the white decks sparkled with the brine which the swab had not yet dried; a cock in a coop lustily cheered the crow of another cock opposite; and the voices of men in speech, delivered in command or in reply, sounded hoarse, dim and entombed in the magic vault of atmosphere into whose blue tranquillity the line of the ship's rails was beginning to steam and the paint on her sides to smell rudely.

The four returned visitors entered their cabins, and shortly afterwards seated themselves in their accustomed places at the cuddy table, where the rest of the people were breakfasting. Mr. Redway filled the chair next to Mrs. Ramsay.

"Well, gentlemen, what of your visit?" said the captain, at the head of the table.

"Oh, its worse than a sepulchre," said the Irresponsible. "Rags or bones—er!" he continued, pleasantly imitating the lachrymose cry of the streets, familiar to our kitchen tenants. "A glass of brandy-and-seltzer, steward! No tea—nothing hot, thank yer."

"Did you ask the master of that show ship to report you, sir?" inquired Buzacott, addressing Mr. Redway.

"No," was the answer of the stricken gentleman, who broke the string of whispers he was sliding into the pretty ear alongside to answer the skipper. "There is no occasion to report me. I know that I am safe, and I am satisfied."

Mrs. Mowbray exchanged looks with Mrs. Latimer. What could be more suspicious than this perverse indisposition in Mr. Beauclerk to send the glad news of his salvation home?

"Captain Skull is not going to get home before this ship," said Mr. Matthews.

"What did you think of the skeletons, Mr. Beauclerk?" asked Mr. Jansen, with that note and air of familiarity which is shocking to the fastidious amongst Englishmen, and outrageous in a foreigner.

"Why," answered Mr. Redway, with an acid sneer, and a glance of haughty disgust at the questioner, "I thought that the meanest of them offered a handsomer show of bones than your skeleton is ever likely to make."

Mrs. Ramsay laughed heartily, crying amidst her merriment—

"Ask Mr. Beauclerk more questions, Mr. Jansen."

"What are they the skeletons of?" inquired Mrs. Mowbray. "Not British noblemen, I hope."

"Who can tell but that the meanest of them, as Mr.

Beauclerk describes it, may have had royal blood in it when it walked clothed," said Mrs. Latimer.

This sally justified a conspiracy of laughter between the Scandinavian and Mrs. Mowbray; and one Miss Shallott, a virgin of forty, travelling in search of nerves, in charge of a maid, ate with uneasiness, apprehending a difficulty.

"Do you think, Mr. Jansen," said Mrs. Ramsay, in a derisive way, "that you could mesmerize one of those skeletons, and make it use bad language under the influence of your powerful will?"

"That was a simple question to ask a man," answered Mr. Jansen, with a faint colour of resentment in his cheeks. "Time was," he continued, nodding at her, "that when the brains was out the man was ted, yer know. But I will mesmerize you with pleasure, and after you your friend Mr. Beauclerk."

"I'll have no more of it," exclaimed Captain Buzacott, sternly.

This produced a general silence, which lasted perhaps two minutes; Mr. Redway then began in a confidential humming note to relate to Mrs. Ramsay the story of his visit. Mrs. Matthews asked her husband questions, and Mrs. Mowbray plied the Irresponsible with interrogations, whose undissembled reference to Mr. Beauclerk was not lost upon Mrs. Ramsay, though her lunatic companion was too much engrossed by his subject to hear anything but the rattle of the springless machinery inside his head.

One by one the passengers left the breakfast-table. Mrs. Ramsay entered her cabin to dress herself for the deck, returned to Mr. Redway, and the pair went up the steps. Mrs. Mowbray was the last to leave. Mr. Matthews, coming out of his cabin, approached, and stood beside her, and said in a low voice, after casting a look around—

"Do you think, Mrs. Mowbray, that Mrs. Ramsay has accepted him?"

"Trust her to make sure that they are engaged," answered the lady.

"But what can be her object," said Mr. Matthews, who, like many other husbands, was tormented by a deeper quality of curiosity than ever harassed his wife, "in taking a man of whom she absolutely knows nothing outside his own and that French Count's statements—a man she had never set eyes on down to the moment when he was lifted out of the washstand?"

"Pardon me, she says she knew him in London—met him somewhere," answered Mrs. Mowbray. "Trust a certain type of women to find excuses when they want men."

"But her object?" said Mr. Matthews. "She is rich and free, good-looking enough to command admiration from our sex, and to enjoy homage without suffering for it."

He was driving his gimlet into a cask that was full, and he knew that it would leak.

"Stop here whilst I fetch a book from my cabin," said the acrimonious lady.

She returned and placed an open volume in his hands. Her forefinger rested upon the passage. Before reading he viewed the book with the curiosity of a second-hand dealer, read its title on the back, its name and author and date on the title-page, then this:—

"Mr. —— was not only transported for a heinous offence, but while under probation had the character of the most unruly and incorrigible of the chain-gang he belonged to. Every kind of severity and indignity was heaped upon his obdurate spirit. He was sent to join a distant lime-burning gang, where he was both worked and thrashed like a donkey, for his back was scored with

frequent and severe applications of the 'cat.' He was whipped at the cart's-tail through the streets of Sydney. Cockatoo Island, the convict black hole of New South Wales, was only too good for him, and he was drafted as irreclaimable to that pandemonium of the Pacific, Norfolk Island. Yet he reformed—who shall say through what agency? Perhaps the devil was whipped out of him. Perhaps reflection cast the foul fiend out; for the reprobate had a long head on those same fusticated shoulders. At any rate, in process of time, and by a mixture of good conduct, good luck, and address, the branded and scourged felon, the manacled slave, became a wealthy capitalist. At the time of the general money-quake he fell like the rest, failing for an immense sum; I do not know the amount, but certainly not less than—probably twice as much as—£50,000. Unlike his compeers in mischance, bond and free, who sheltered themselves in the court, by a strong effort he succeeded in paying twenty shillings in the pound; and, having thus reduced himself almost to beggary, he recommenced life undismayed and with that resolute energy which, ill-directed, had formerly made him foremost amongst the bad. This man, like some others of his class, gave to his two daughters the highest education England could furnish. He is the landlord of many of the aristocracy of Sydney, who find him both liberal and correct in his dealings. The calling he has adopted brings him into contact with persons of every grade. He is extensively employed by the Government, as well as by companies and individuals, and has always been cited as a punctual, respectable, and upright man of business, as well as a singularly clever one, although even in his old age he can scarcely write his name. In the only transaction I had in the colony, involving several hundred pounds' worth of property, I deliberately selected this meritorious person from among

several of the same profession, possessing the highest qualifications of character and capacity.

"Since I made the above note its subject has paid the debt of nature."

"And this was Mrs. Ramsay's father?" exclaimed Mr. Matthews, closing the book and returning it to its amiable owner.

"You'll observe, however, that the gentleman was buried with more honours than had he been a distinguished member of the Government," Mrs. Mowbray said, with a face to be interpreted as you pleased.

"Has she a sister or a brother?"

"One sister only, and she is dead."

"Did you know the man?"

"Not to speak to," answered the lady, with much assumption of scorn.

"Strange that such a man should have been the father of so fine a woman," exclaimed Mr. Matthews, heedless of the offence of praising the charms of one woman to another.

"Chut!" she cried, "every kitchen area has its beauty."

"Will you show that book to Mr. Beauclerk?" inquired Mr. Matthews, scarcely suppressing an emotion of contempt for the woman with whom he conversed.

"I can only wonder at you," she answered. "Surely, Mr. Matthews, your wife cannot know the mean opinion you have of us women!"

"I don't think she does," thought Mr. Matthews, as Mrs. Mowbray, book in hand and nose in air, swept through her cabin door, and vanished behind it.

You will be surprised by the behaviour, the personal remarks, the ill-breeding, the twopenny vices of meanness, jealousy, aversion of which some of our passengers were guilty, if you have not been locked up in a sailing-ship

for three or four months with a number of men, women, nurses, and children. Old Indians will recall the scandals that flourished upon the high seas betwixt the Land's End and the Sand Heads. But the Indian voyage was commonly embellished by people of polish and culture, military gentlemen more or less distinguished in appearance, and charming ladies of degree, and the ayahs counted for nothing. But the Colonial gentleman and the Colonial lady in the days of the *Crimson Banner* were still, so to speak, in the making. Their pedigrees ran into servants, farm-labourers, convicts, masons, and so on, though often you fell in with a man of noble family, of whom, I am sorry to say, very little good is usually told, because impoverished men of this sort stuck to the populous centres instead of going afield, and tried hard to get along as billiard-markers, drivers of cabs, waiters at hotels, and the like missions, for which they were not designed by a beneficent Providence; and I have not dreamt, because I have certainly known the heirs to baronetcies and refined but hungry young men in broken clothes, whose address on an envelope was "the honourable," very glad indeed to serve as bottle-washers to the head-steward of a returning ship full of the opulent descendants of the expatriated, who dined at a table at which the heirs of the baronetcies, and others distinguished by courtesy titles, were held unfit to wait as not knowing what to do. Therefore I draw no exaggerated picture; but it is to be regretted, in the interests of Mr. Beauclerk's dignity, that he should have referred sarcastically to Mr. Jansen's skeleton.

Shortly after the hour of noon, a large, moist, violet eye opened in the white, calm face of the ocean due north, and presently the sails of the ship *Crimson Banner* fell asleep to the pleasant music of broken waters. It was the first of a light air of wind, and the ship of shells slided slowly astern. Until some time before the first

dog-watch came round, she was nothing but a star-coloured vision, reddening with the sun, on a sea-line melting into heaven.

This was the beginning of a succession of draughts and breezes, which fetched curses out of the sailors because, shifting often, and often blowing right over the jibboom end, they obliged the seamen to man the braces, to man the clew-garnets, to man the down-hauls, that the ship might solve, with much box-hauling of yards, the irritating problems of the atmosphere.

In this wise she cut the Line, as the seafarer terms the equator, and Captain Buzacott, from his weather-walk of the poop, often directed his eyes over the port bow in search of the south-east Trade-wind. It was dull work for the passengers; none of them, if you except Mr. Redway, was at sea for his or for her health, and detention in the tropics was without charm as a promise of renovated tissue or an appreciable prolongation of life. How did they amuse themselves? They didn't. They tried quoits of grummet, and sweated and sulked and called for brandy and soda. They tried chess; but the thermometer triumphed over the conflict, just as it rendered cards a vexing distraction, and nothing remained but books, and, now and again, a turn at the piano, and long loungings in deck-chairs under the awning until the awning was furled and revealed the velvet heavens of the tropic evening trembling into stars over the visionary specks of trucks swaying dreamily. Not even a shark offered himself as a diversion. The baited hook was towed, and expectation was illustrated by the pale, perspiring face of a passenger scarcely reflected in the short scope of polished wake in which, from a boat dragged by a line, you might have read, all aslant in tremulous white threads, the letters of the ship's name painted on the slope of her counter. And as to the piano—only two people frequented it, and one

was Mrs. Ramsay and the other Miss Shallott. This latter lady played with the mechanical touch of a clock-work puppet made in Germany, and sang sentimental songs through thin lips which were scarcely parted, and with a demure face. Nobody heeded her, and she sang for herself. Nobody was humbug enough to applaud what none relished or desired. Indeed, tedium, ennui, and boredom made the most of them as ingenuous as talkative children.

Mrs. Ramsay sometimes sang, but never unless to please, and at the request of, Mr. Redway. She sang well; she had an instinct in her fingers which graced her voice with helpful accompaniment. On one occasion, when Mr. Jansen stood in the cuddy and listened to her, with Mr. Redway, with dignified bearing, at her side, stooping from his sentinel posture only to turn the leaves of her music, the Scandinavian, with an arch leer which converted his question into a social misdemeanour, asked the unfortunate gentleman if he would not again oblige with a trial at the fiddle. Mr. Redway answered with passion, "No, sir;" and Mrs. Ramsay turned upon the music-stool to frown at the objectionable naturalized British subject.

In fact, she was Mr. Redway's guardian angel, for it is certain that had he been left to himself he must have fallen a victim to the devices of those amongst the passengers whose suspicions of him were latent though unconfirmed. She desired him to be what he proclaimed himself to be and, by desiring, believed him to be, and a suggestion to the contrary was a rudeness to her which she resented and ended. So that he remained untroubled and in full possession of his disorganized intellect.

For the real wonder of the man's mental state was this: he was never inconsistent, he never went behind his own statements; fertile as was his imagination, its *vraisemblance* was the artistry of a narrative planned with

consummate skill. The possibility of this every medical reader will recognize, and illustrate by examples which have come within his own knowledge. But it is not for my hand to deal with the psychology of physical disease. Enough if the superficial truth is recorded. I attempt no analysis. To quote the late Professor Holmes's admirable image, "The old flat stone in the garden must lie. I have neither knowledge nor power to turn it over that the light may reveal the hundred wriggling apparitions which squirm and flee before the truth."

And as to Mr. Redway's health: it might have been supposed that the long spell of excessive heat in the tropics would have affected him injuriously, would have increased the murmur in the lung, the trouble of the cough, and hung out distress-signals in the shape of the hectic in the cheek, the increasing brightness of the eye, a gaining wistfulness of expression. Nothing of the sort. South of the Line, in latitude 3° or thereabouts, Dr. Macpherson one morning sounded him with scrupulous care, and an anxiety worthy of a long and honourable friendship—one of those features of the medical character which sustain and promote the admiration felt by all whose opinion is of the least worth for one of the noblest of callings. The doctor sounded him, I say, and with Scotch diligence and acumen questioned him, and the decision which he communicated to the captain was—

"I am of opinion that if there ever was a lesion it is healed, and the lung well. I can detect nothing to excite the least suspicion of phthisis in the man."

"A good job for him," was the little skipper's answer. "No doubt he'll want to come home with us," and, having said this, he fell into a fit of musing, for though he was as fully convinced as Mrs. Ramsay herself, that Mr. Redway was the complete Beauclerk he represented himself to be, rich in money at Coutts', rich in estate in

Wiltshire, a member of clubs of the first water, a well-bred highly connected gentleman, as was discernible by the most ignorant eye in the ship, yet he had not paid his passage-money, nor discharged the bill of the slops which ill-fitted him, and he still had to pay; and how could he square the matter in Sydney, where he was not known? And if he came home in the ship, and a financial difficulty followed his return, what would the owners think of the prudence of Captain Buzacott, who was bound down by a law stronger than any Act of Parliament to consider only the interests of his employers, whether or not it clashed with that of the underwriters, or even imperilled the safety of human lives?

These questions occurring to the little mind of the little commander, were, strangely enough, answered and settled, a few days later, in this wise: It was about three o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. Redway was lying in his cabin, resting his head, which ached. A doctor acquainted with Mr. Redway's condition must have followed with interest the course of his headaches. He would hardly be able to conjecture the issue, but he might hope that the sphinx-like immobility of the unhappy man's distemper might be changed to the satisfaction of his unsuspicious wife at home.

Mrs. Ramsay sat on deck alone. Captain Buzacott stumped his weather plank also alone. The lady sometimes directed her soft dark eyes at the little man who wore a crushed grey hat with a black band, which about perfected his low-comedy face. After a little while Mrs. Ramsay rose, crossed to the captain, and said to him—

"May I walk with you?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

He crooked his arm. She rested her gloved hand upon his sleeve, and they began to pace; but though his legs twinkled as he walked, being a short man, she was

much too unconsciously and naturally graceful to keep step with him. What, indeed, can be more hideous than the gait of a woman keeping time with a man's swinging legs?

"This is a very slow ship, Captain Buzacott."

"We never offer ourselves as a clipper, madam."

"Why don't they help us poor Colonists by sending the mails by way of India?"

"They're constructing a canal," said the captain. "It's to be done by a Frenchman. I am sorry he's not an Englishman. It's Lord Palmerston's doing. A Prime Minister shouldn't have any prejudices. If ever that waterway's finished—which it never will be, for it will silt up with sand and muck faster than they can excavate—you'll be getting your letters in Sydney in quite time enough for bad news to travel."

"Why don't they send our letters by the Overland route?" said Mrs. Ramsay.

"A bag of love-letters perched on the hump of a dromedary, with an ass going before, carrying the business communications. I see 'em," exclaimed Captain Buzacott, laughing.

"I am wondering how on earth Mr. Beauclerk is to make himself heard of at this rate of sailing," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, casting her eyes upon the nearest patch of colour upon the sea in dumb comment on its tardy passage.

"The screw's not going to supersede the sailing-ship," said Captain Buzacott, neglecting Mrs. Ramsay's remark. "Look at the Australian Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. Gone smash in a little more than two years. That was in 1855. What's the argument? Those steam vessels occupied from eighty to one hundred and twenty days in the run from England to Sydney. Whilst fast ships to Port Philip do it in eighty-two to one hundred

and ten days, with no cost of coal, no engine-room expenses. The Government's quite right to take no notice of steam, so far as mails are concerned."

Buzacott was an old sailor, and his views corresponded with those of the typical Sea Lord, whose advice to the First Lord, by every canon of tradition, arrests the progress of the British Royal Navy by at least fifty years.

"What I said was, how can Mr. Beauclerk communicate with his home, and expect a reply within even an unreasonable time, whilst such ships as this carry the mails?" said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Well, he'll have to do like the rest. He must wait."

When Captain Buzacott had said this he paused, and then added—

"I dare say he'll ask to come home with us, and I shall want to see my way. But he seems to have no friends in Australia, and I have got to consider my owners, Mrs. Ramsay."

She withdrew her hand from his arm to fiddle with a button on the wrist of her glove, in which she found an excuse to keep her eyes downward cast, whilst she said—

"I have not yet told you, Captain Buzacott, that Mr. Beauclerk and I are engaged to be married soon after our arrival in Sydney."

The pause that followed was significant of Buzacott's astonishment. Yet he had no right to be astonished. What had been going on had happened under his nose, and surely the little man had eyes for his passengers as well as for the weather, and for the clew of a sail that wanted another drag.

"Well," said he, awkwardly, "it's my duty to answer that I congratulate you."

His language was colourless with insincerity. He

longed rather to reason with her. But, then, she was a widow. She would know the ropes. She had buried a husband, whose grave was embellished with a considerable growth of experiences of divers hues, and she could pluck any flower that symbolized her meaning; and she was very well off, and possessed a well-spring of sauciness and repartee, and armouries of brilliant darts in her eyes, and Buzacott was afraid of her; and he was too prudent to meddle with her wishes, or to oppose his views as an impediment to her desires.

"I may further tell you, captain," continued the lady. gracefully restoring her hand to the sleeve on the crooked limb, "that you can look to me for all expenses that Mr. Beauclerk may have caused you by the time we get to Sydney."

"Very well, madam; very well," said Buzacott. "I am quite satisfied."

And after a few seconds the slow smile that crawled about his mouth proclaimed him sincere in this.

"Am I at liberty to mention the subject?" he asked.

"Oh certainly," she replied, with what is called effusion. "We wish it to be universally known."

CHAPTER XVI

THE BRAZILIAN

If you cannot protect your domestic secrets against the inquisitiveness or, what is worse, the acrimonious conjectures which find expression in convictions of your friends and neighbours in a provincial town or city, what barrier shall you exalt to preserve your own business on board a ship less populous than a little village? Even if Mr. Redway's and Mrs. Ramsay's secret of matrimonial engagement had not been divulged by the lady to the skipper, it would certainly and speedily have been construed by their fellow-passengers. Two people of the opposite sexes cannot be always sitting together, talking and whispering together, looking into each other's eyes, secreting themselves in unfrequented parts of a ship's deck, blushing and smiling, and simpering, and so on, and so on, with much inclusion of drooping eyelashes and lofty though tender courtesy, without exciting observation and comment which inevitably end in decisive conclusions. Mrs. Mowbray had long ago made up her mind, and Mrs. Latimer had agreed with her; and before the ship struck the parallel of five degrees south, all the passengers perfectly understood that Mrs. Ramsay had been offered marriage by Mr. Redway and had accepted him.

They understood this, I say, but they nevertheless did not quite know what to think of it. Not, of course, that it was any concern of theirs, but the love of troubling

ourselves about other people's affairs is as active a factor of human life at sea as it is ashore: more active, possibly because at sea passengers have nothing more to do than to criticise one another: to observe the manner in which, Miss Sullott curls her front hair; the variety of dresses which Mrs. Latimer has brought with her; the odd taste exhibited by Mrs. Mowbray in her choice of caps; Mrs. Matthews' affected manners when she puts one of her children upon her knee and talks to the little creature, but at the people round about her; the self-complacency of Mrs. St. Clair when she tops another's statements of adventure by her own experiences of foreign travel, the costly dinners she has eaten in Paris, the charges of a Viennese hairdresser for trimming her head for a ball at the Embassy, her strange rescue in an Alpine struggle by a gentleman in a cloak and a sugar-loafed hat, who turned out to be a nobleman of the most amiable and engaging manners, and, strange to relate, a connection by marriage of her husband.

The captain began it; he told the doctor, who betrayed himself by congratulating Mrs. Ramsay in the presence of three listeners. After which it was common property, and for some days it filled the minds of people who were weary of head winds, and treacherous quartering cat's-paws, and the pendulum swing of hanging trays in the saloon, and the sulky flap of canvas, and the melancholy sob of water, and an eternal girdle, sometimes spacious, flawless, and keen-cut in the mystic depths of the opal heavens,—like the prodigious disc of dew which the sun centres in a dim but lovely jewel, whose rays paint the margin of the mighty target with the flickering glories of the rainbow,—and sometimes shrunk by heated vapour into a diameter measurable by a cannon-shot.

So here was Mr. Redway, with a wife mourning him for dead at home, engaged to be married to a rich and

sprightly widow in such good faith, so treasonably had shipwreck served him, that he did not believe more fully in the assurances and promises of the New Testament, than he did in his maniacal creed of love and matrimony.

Perhaps this was not so strange, seeing how obstinately bad it was with the unhappy man's brains, as Mrs. Ramsay's prompt and glad acceptance of him without a single doubt, a single misgiving as to his organic and radical individuality. But, if the doctor was deceived, if the captain was satisfied, if others of the passengers saw nothing beyond points interpretable by spleen, or characteristics not wholly uncommon amongst men of dignified social position and antecedents, why should not we find excuses in abundance for Mrs. Ramsay, who was in love with the man, who admired his face which she found kingly, the inheritance of caste, the ineffaceable symbol of class, who desired him for a husband for reasons of ambition so popular amongst women that they need no commendation, who took him as he was, nor ever heard any remark that fell from his lips, nor ever took heed of any expression that put a new intelligence into the meaning of his countenance, to excite, even in her deepest musing and secret contemplation of him, the faintest shadow of an idea that he was the victim of an enormous hallucination, that his name was not Beauclerk, that he was a married man—that, in short, like the drunken sailor in the play, he did not know where he was?

But an incident was fast coming along to put an end to the interest raised by Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay. Dawn had broken in the middle of the sky. This is a not very uncommon phenomenon at sea. It has been held, it may still be held, as portentous of storm. There are some whose experiences have taught them otherwise. It was to be a fine day, despite the absence of the familiar spectacle of its birth. The sun rose out of a large thunder squall which stretched

like the raven wing of some impossibly gigantic sea-fowl, in a sort of arch covering many degrees of the horizon. The orb of day struck a hundred flaming spears out of the eclipsing pall of vapour into a clear sky that soared from a moist pink over the edge of the squall into pale azure, darkening into a lovely shade of blue in the west, whence the wind was blowing in cloudless gushings warm as new milk. It was as though a bloody conflict was being waged in the heart of that squall, for you saw lances of crimson lightning as from the broadside of battleships, and the explosions came rolling up against the wind in sullen long-drawn notes. But, when the sun sprang clear, the squall fell to pieces, and the horizon was a pure sweep from where the sun clasped it with jewels of light.

The *Crimson Banner*, making a south-westerly course, was close hauled. I am wrong. Captain Buzacott, consistently with the resolution of his life to make a foul wind a fair wind, kept his weather-braces slightly checked, insomuch that the fore-topmast studding-sail—the only wing of the sort abroad—was kept a rap-full, and the round bows of the ship drove the water into wrinkles trimmed with foam lace, and now and again the sea, for very love of the old tub, kissed her lip with a leap of spray that made her weep tears of brine (in a ship's way) with joy of sailing, of being buoyant and caressed by her mother.

What was that away on the weather-bow? The tip of a cloud? Or a sail?

"A sail," answered the mate, in reply to the question of a passenger. "Rising hand over fist."

Some minutes passed. And what was that beyond that glowing gleam of canvas? "The smoke of a steamer."

"Will she speak us? Will she receive letters for home?" inquired Mr. Matthews, of the mate, with excitement.

"There is the captain, sir," answered the mate.

"We'll make our number," was the captain's reply to Mr. Matthews, "and ask to be reported. Those steamers are timed, and will not stop to oblige passengers in sailing-ships."

It was then no later than about half-past six. By seven most of the people were on deck, and the sea to windward was submitting a show. First of all, and coming along with the speed of a gallied whale towing, by harpoons, boats sunk to their gunwale in foam, was a schooner—a vast, soft mass of whiteness swelling sun-bright, shaded, with gentle, graceful liftings of cutwater, that flashed the splendour of new gold from her brilliant metal sheathing, racing in spume of the glorious brightness of virgin snow when shone upon. Astern of her was a steamer with a yellow funnel, and pole masts, and a wedge-shaped fore-shortening of low black hull, and the roll of smoke from her chimney was as black as a London fog at midnight, with a tail that disappeared behind the sea-line. It was impossible for a nautical eye to fail to see instantly that the steamer was chasing the schooner, and as though to make conjecture a solid indubitable assurance, a gun winked at the steamer's bow, the faint flash of crimson tongue vanished in a ball of silk, which the wind shredded and blew away, down along the streaming sea, like flying scud whitened by moonlight.

What was the matter? What did that sight signify? A contrabandist pursued by a Government ship? Every glass that could be borrowed or sneaked, telescope and binocular, was levelled, now at the schooner, now at the steamer, whose bows in a few minutes flashed afresh their levin scar into another ball of silk. But, if missile there were, it did not hit the schooner which, under swelling, marble-hard, triumphant piles of canvas, swept onwards in beauty of shape, in splendour of foam, in glory of colour; until she was shimmering through it right abeam, her full

form displayed; and every sailor aboard the *Crimson Banner* marvelled at the immensely long heads of her fore-sail, and main-sail, the hoist of her topsail, and the cloud upon cloud of stay-sail and jib, which eclipsed, with milk-like softness and exquisitely tender shadowing, an area of the sea beyond, within whose compass a fleet of battle-ships could have floated.

The excitement everywhere on board the *Crimson Banner* was prodigious. Even the ladies, like sailors tempestuously summoned by the boatswain, had scarcely stayed to dress, and Mrs. Mowbray in her dressing-gown, and no other headgear than a comb and hair-pins; and Mrs. Latimer in a resplendent tea-gown hastily gathered about her figure for a rush up to witness the stirring spectacle; and Mrs. Matthews, with her husband's straw hat on the back of her head, and her front hair loose about her eyebrows, as though she had been rehearsing the sailor's hornpipe, half costumed for the antics; those ladies and others, not to mention Mrs. Ramsay, who immediately and easily found a position alongside Mr. Redway, stared with the males at the pursuer and pursued, one through an ivory opera-glass, one through a lorgnette at the end of a stick, and one under a white hand, with fingers sparkling like the jewels in the eastern sea.

"If the wind freshens," said Captain Buzacott, "she'll sink the steamer hull down before four bells in the forenoon watch. If the wind takes off, she is a gone coon."

"The most beautiful yacht I have seen in all my life!" exclaimed Mr. Redway; "and I have been a guest aboard some splendid vessels. My friend, Lord Conyngham, never owned anything more spirited, choice and elegant."

"Why are they firing at her?" cried Mrs. Ramsay.

"What's that flag flying at the ensign-staff at the stern of the steamer?" shouted the Irresponsible.

"The Brazilian," answered the mate, with his eye at his own telescope, which a midshipman had rushed to his cabin to fetch.

"Another gun!" yelped Mr. Matthews, red with sensation.

"The beggar 'ull wing her," said Mr. St. Clair, in a deep voice. "That shot fell close astern."

"What was it all about?" cried Mr. Jansen, in a high note, flying out of the companion-way as though hurled through the aperture by several strong men.

By this time the schooner was on the quarter, and her wake was a mill-race, and the weight of the wind in her magnificent spread of cloths vitalized her keel with the spirit of steam: it was flying rather than sailing. The curl of surge smiting her coppered fore-foot shot in splinters of brine, keen and diamond-like as tropic hail, into the bright rush of air to windward, and swept with the bending grace of a feather into the water to leeward, or shattered its sparkling coil in the violet hollows of the sails: and thus clothed, informed by that sentience, and graced by those fairy beauties of light and form, with which the ocean in her radiant moods of the tropics exalts, purifies, and sweetens to the eye, the floating handiwork of fallible man, the schooner fled past, as the shadow of a bird over a verdant pasture, until she was astern of the Australian ship, and the steamer right abeam.

It was then that a sudden burst of smoke, thickened with dust, soared from the engine-room hatchway of the Brazilian; her machinery fell lifeless, and with nothing but her own way upon her she came to a stand. The instant the people of the schooner perceived this, they hoisted the handsome colours of the Republic of Venezuela and dipped the flag thrice in derisive and ironic courtesy of farewell, and in a very short time the cloud of

snow-white canvas had faded into the delicate sheen of pearl, and seemed to melt in the light azure film of the sky as a little wisp of cloud faints out of sight in the noon of a summer day.

Meanwhile the Brazilian steamer had sunk her ensign half-mast high on its staff. With her this was a signal of distress. With most ships this is a signal of death, which is not necessarily distress. The inverted flag of Brazil—that sallow green flag with its yellow escutcheoned lozenge—makes no appeal to the untutored eye; it looks the same whether you hoist it right side up or down. But the half-masted signal instantly caught and detained Captain Buzacott, who, after a moment's pause, shouted to the mate to in with the fore-topmast studding-sail and brace aback the yards of the main.

"She's a Government ship, sir!" he exclaimed to a passenger, walking rapidly to and fro, his legs flitting under the skirts of his coat with a sudden violent hurry of nerves, his arms hanging up and down with no more life in them than you could catch in the fishhook curl of his fingers. "There's a pennant at her mast-head. Her wants must be attended to."

In a moment all was commotion and the clamorous throats of merchantmen, dragging upon down-hauls and rounding-in upon braces. It was at least ten minutes before the *Crimson Banner* came to a stand, and then her people saw those aboard the Brazilian lower a boat full of men which approached with flashing oars and enlarging figures, till you could see a man in uniform and a man in an engine-room-boiler suit abaft a row of six oarsmen habited in straw hats, loose white shirts, and white breeches. Captain Buzacott descended the poop steps to receive the occupants of the boat's stern-sheets at the gangway, out of which a short scope of steps had been

dropped. The boat hooked on amid some unintelligible shouts in the Portuguese language from the mariner in buttons, and a number of swarthy faces, black with mustaches and vicious with crimson eyeballs, looked up at the row of heads which embellished the top-gallant rail of the Australian ship. An officer, dressed like an old Adelphi hero in a nautical drama, with a badge on his cap, buttons down his coat, and rings round his cuffs, climbed the steps, and was followed by a brown-bearded man, of a rough and homely appearance, with an eye that hinted at Dundee or Aberdeen. He looked grimy in his engine-room apparel; what was visible of the flesh of his face in the hair that covered his cheeks, chin and upper lip, was red and shiny with sweat, and he blinked as he stepped on to the deck as though the grime of the explosion had made his sight painful. The Brazilian officer, a tolerably good-looking man with up-curled mustache, good teeth, and large, bland, dusky eyes suggestive of a paternity not wholly free of the "colourishing," to use Sir Thomas Browne's word, of African blood, saluted Captain Buzacott with a grave motion of his hand to his head, and addressed in his own tongue his companion in the boiler suit, who exclaimed, with a rich Northern burr—

"This gentleman is first lieutenant of yon steamer, the *Dom Pedro*, of and from Rio, a Government ship that's broken down whilst in pursuit of an enemy. And he comes with the compliments of the captain to beg that you will tow him back to the port he hails from."

He delivered this short speech in the level tone of a theatrical manager who reads from a written paper that the audience will be delighted to hear that the celebrated Wilton Snarley and the inimitable Madame Ella Leggatini will postively appear on Monday next. Having spoken these words, the man in the boiler suit wiped his brow on

a sort of comforter known in our Navy as a sweat rag, and gazed nervously round him as though in reproach.

"Tow you?" exclaimed Captain Buzacott. "I suppose you can see that we are a sailing-ship?"

"Interpret!" hissed the lieutenant, through his teeth.

When Buzacott was interpreted, the lieutenant looked aloft at the canvas, and shrugged his shoulders, and said what the boiler suit explained as—

"Certainly she is a sailing-ship, but she can tow us all the same."

"What happened to you?" asked the little skipper.

"One end of our superheater has been blown out, and three firemen boiled dead."

Buzacott, who knew as much about steam as the average sailor of a screw tramp, exclaimed—

"Lor! and can't you repair it?"

"No, sir," was the answer. "The ends were dished and the middle of one end, that must have been fractured before, has been blown out, and the ship's of no use—just the same as if the tail shaft had gone and the propeller slipped out."

"But the propeller still hangs, I suppose?" said Buzacott.

"Oh yes, that's fixed enough," answered the boiler suit.

"How are we going to drag her along with it? And how is she going to steer with it?" exclaimed Buzacott.

"What does he say?" cried the lieutenant, who had been fiercely pulling his savage mustache. When he was answered he poured forth a torrent to the boiler suit, who said—

"This is Lieutenant Cardoza, sir."

The officer, on hearing his name pronounced, raised his cap.

"Our captain's name is Paulo Roderigue. I am the chief engineer—— " he paused.

"What's you name?" inquired Buzacott.

"Ian Maclachlan."

"Are you a Portuguese too?" asked the little skipper, with a suppressed smile which curled his low-comedy mouth.

But the engineer was fresh from beholding three boiled men, from the shock and consternation of an engine-room explosion, and, further, he was a Scotchman. He answered, "No, sir," with the gravity of a monkey that muses upon a hot potato, and proceeded—

"The lieutenant begs me to state that the screw will make no difference in towing. The *Dom Pedro's* been tried in shifting jobs, and answers her helm as though there was no propeller in the water."

"What's that schooner you've been chasing?" inquired Buzacott, glancing at his first mate, who stood a little way apart, and at some of the passengers who were listening to this conversation on the quarter-deck, whilst others bent attentive ears over the break of the poop rail.

"She is a vessel called the *Defensivo*," answered the engineer. "She's English built, and was formerly the *Lady Gertrude*. She hails from a Venezuelan port, but I don't know her owners. She's heavily armed for a vessel of her size—you might have caught sight of an eighteen-pounder on her fok'sle——"

"I caught sight of what looked like a tarpaulin resembling the roof of a hut," interrupted Captain Buzacott.

"She keeps her guns hid," said the engineer. "Her business is to harass and destroy everything that trades with the Brazilians. She got the heels of the wind. Give her a breeze and she'll laugh at the swiftest steamer afloat. We should have had her this time, though, but for that bust up."

"What's your tonnage?"

"Eighteen hundred gross."

"A poor ship," said Buzacott, elevating himself on the tip of his toes to obtain a sight of the steamer over the topgallant bulwark.

"What does he say?" hissed the lieutenant, fierce with impatience, and that sense of imbecility which attends the hearkening to speech that is unintelligible. When he was answered, he let fly a volley in Portuguese.

"I'm to tell you," said the engineer, addressing the little skipper, "that just a week since we came up with a sinking Spanish steamer bound from Cadiz to Lima with twelve thousand pounds' worth of Spanish specie aboard. We took off the crew and took out the money, and next day transferred her people to a homeward-bound barque; but at the request of the captain of the wrecked vessel kept the coin for delivery at Rio, for a fresh consignment, and it's still aboard, making the *Dom Pedro* as a one-boiler ship with first-class engines, a valuable salvage job to you, captain, if you are willing to tow us."

The lieutenant spoke with the engineer; a few sentences were exchanged, and the officer fastened his dark and burning eyes upon Buzacott's countenance, that was humorous with reverie and perplexity, desire and misgiving, the balancing of considerations. The little man looked for some moments fixedly at the steamer, then ran his eye over his own ship's decks, ending with a pause of contemplation aloft.

"Step into the cuddy, gentlemen!" he said, and led the way. "What will you take?"

The lieutenant, with his cap off, said, through the boiler suit, that a cup of coffee would be grateful, and the other, also hatless and disclosing a considerable area of bald head, which furnished him with an almost Shakespearean altitude of brow, muttered, "Just a cup of Scorch."

Whilst the steward attended to the instructions Buzacott delivered, Buzacott stepped to his cabin and returned with a chart which he opened, placed upon the table, and overhung. Though all the passengers were now astir, they gave the cuddy a wide berth. They perceived that something which concerned the captain alone of all the others in that ship, was in the wind. And they understood that he would expect them to hold aloof, that he would exhibit resentment if he was troubled with questions or disturbed by that sort of dumb importunity which is implied by the propinquity of the starer or the askant listener.

"It will be a towage," said Buzacott, after carefully scrutinizing the chart, "of over eight hundred miles. It may occupy a fortnight."

"We shall be going your road, sir," said the engineer, anxiously.

"Humanity forbids me abandoning you," said Buzacott, in a musing way, thinking entirely of his owners and his own personal profit through such an undertaking. "A sailing-ship towing a steamer! And there may come a head wind. And when we've lost a day through making you fast to us, the hawser may carry away or the weather may oblige me to let go, or a steamer may come along willing to take your tow-rope, and all our trouble and all our detention may go for nothing, with a curse in rich Portuguese atop of it."

"Your health, captain," said the engineer, taking a tumbler from the steward. "And you'll tow us, I hope."

The lieutenant sipped a cup of coffee, which, being ready in the galley, had been quickly brought aft. Mrs. Ramsay came down the companion-steps and paused to look at him. In a moment you saw, by the expression in his dark eyes, that he had forgotten all about the bursting of the superheater, and could think of nothing but the

fine woman who gazed at him. In which he proved himself human, and in a particular degree a sailor, to our insular traditionary idea of which, however, he conformed about as happily as if he had been Punch.

"What a hideous race the Portuguese are," thought Mrs. Ramsay, whose knowledge of the people of that nation was limited to the call of a ship she had sailed in at Madeira, where, out of several Portuguese persons who had come aboard, two had presented themselves loaded with goitre. She floated into her cabin with trailing skirt and bronze-tinctured brow, to complete her toilet for the breakfast-table.

"Well, I'll tow you," said Buzacott, to the engineer, after a prolonged look at the chart.

The engineer spoke to the lieutenant, who bowed profoundly, cup poised in one hand, saucer in the other.

"Give my compliments to the chief officer, and tell him to come down here!" said the captain to the steward.

Mr. O'Gormon arrived.

"I mean to take that steamer in tow," said the captain. "You'll turn all hands to, after breakfast, for the job. I shall tow by single hawser. Can you translate my meaning to the gentleman?" he said, addressing the engineer.

"Oh, I'll make him understand," was the answer, cheerily delivered, and the lieutenant smiled in sympathy with the smile on the face in the boiler suit.

"I shall tow by a bridle, sir," continued Buzacott, to the mate, involving the attention of the engineer by his glance. "It will be led through the quarter-pipes and set up at the main-mast."

"The mizzen-mast, sir?" said the mate, deferentially.

"The main-mast, sir," repeated the captain, emphatically.

The engineer nodded and told the Portuguese lieutenant to wait until the captain had done, when he would interpret.

"A mooring-chain will make a bridle. I'll tow with ninety fathoms of wire, and a coir-spring of thirty fathoms, which you'll secure to the bridle-chain and tow-rope of the Portuguese, who'll do well to set it up at his fore-mast. You'll reeve your bridle through your hawse-pipes," continued Buzacott, to the engineer, "and if you'll go aboard and get your captain to give his instructions, knowing now what my intentions are, I'll manœuvre the ship down to you and send a boat to get the end of your tow-chain for securing to my coir-spring."

"Right, sir!" responded the engineer, who said to the lieutenant in Portuguese, "We must be off at once. The captain will tow us. I will explain his plans as we go."

The lieutenant was ardent in the thanks which the engineer interpreted, and Buzacott and the mate attended him and the engineer to the gangway, and saw them into their boat, which immediately flashed away with dripping, air-jewelling oars for the helpless steamer.

Buzacott and his mate stood in earnest conversation. I will not repeat it. Their language was wholly professional, technical, scientific in the sense of seamanship, and would therefore be unintelligible to the landsman. Three-quarters of an hour later the cuddy breakfast-bell rang, and whilst the passengers were gathered at the table, the boatswain's pipe shrilled in lark-like music forward, and a deep sea voice summoned all hands to the task of taking a disabled steamer in tow.

CHAPTER XVII

IN TOW

All the passengers on board the *Crimson Banner* sat down to breakfast. If they were not a large, they were a full, company. Every man and every woman of the lot were there, and the squall of the baby came from the steerage, like an echo fetched from a cavern; and Captain Buzacott, at the head of the table, "presided," as it is written of the young lady who plays the harmonium at a mixed sailors' semi-religious gathering ashore. The ship was in the grip of her backed top-sail, and, air-choked, lolled swooningly upon the long, steady sway of swell, which flickered with running wrinkles, and about half a mile on the quarter lay the Brazilian, with a faint blueness of smoke draining from her funnel, and making the sky through it shudder, as it does to a drunkard's eye.

The people, on the whole, were silent when they sat down. Most of them had exchanged the morning greeting on deck or earlier. The steward and his two assistants ranged the length of chairs and handed dishes, and were obedient to calls. The captain broke the end of one of the few eggs with which the hens, who embellished the bars of their coops with ceaseless iteration of flaunting red combs, deigned from time to time to bestow upon the cook's mate, who looked after the live-stock. Buzacott had not the aspect of Columbus; nevertheless, he broke his egg as though he were hinting at unvisited land to a

company of fools. But the breaking even of a fresh egg was no news to the passengers, who were uneasy and teeming with curiosity, and were agog—the mate (like the police, when ignorant) having proved reticent — to hear what was going to happen from the captain's own lips. Mr. Jansen, with the assurance of the foreigner, spoke out.

"Was you going to keep company, captain, with that steamer, until help for her comes along?"

"Ah!" muttered Mr. St. Clair, in a deep note.

"Ah!" echoed the Irresponsible, in a tone like the mew of a cat with a cough.

"I intend to tow that steamer to Rio, and we shall set about it after breakfast," answered the captain, letting some yolk of egg fall upon one leg of his trousers, unheeded, in a sudden access of nervous petulance; for he despised Mr. Jansen as a man, and secretly resented that characteristic of impudence, which the Scandinavian possessed in common with thousands of foreigners, a large proportion of whom are naturalized Englishmen.

"Rio!" cried Mrs. St. Clair.

"Rio!" cried Mrs. Latimer.

"Rio!" groaned the Irresponsible.

"Rio!" ejaculated Mr. Jansen, leaning forward to send his eyes up and down the rows of faces. "My Cott!"

"Rio!" murmured Mrs. Ramsay, to Mr. Redway. "Where is Rio?"

"I'll be shot if I know," answered Mr. Redway. "If it's on the West Coast of Africa—— Captain!" he exclaimed, in his loftiest way: "I am here for my health."

The captain took no notice of him. He was overwhelmed at that moment by a variety of inquiries.

"What on earth does he mean by delaying the voyage of this champion crawler?" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, who

that morning wore diamond earrings, whose lightning was not nearly so fine, beautiful, and romantic as the gleams which sped from her eyes, large, dark, and glowing with surprise, disappointment, and indignation. Who does not sympathize with her? We all know that she could not but wish the passage out to end as soon as possible.

"It is a deviation that will vitiate your charter-party," said Mr. Jansen.

"I am master of this ship, sir," said Buzacott, sternly, "and responsible for my conduct."

"It is a vitiation—no, by Cott, I mean a deviation, that shall vitiate your policies of insurances," shouted Mr. Jansen, with immoderate sibilation.

"I beg that you will mind your own business, sir," said Buzacott, making a face in anger like the late Mr. Buckstone's, when, as Tony Lumpkin, that excellent comedian reproved his mother's fears, and fixing the Scandinavian with his eye.

"But Rio!" cried Mrs. Latimer. "Why, it will keep us back a month!"

"No, ma'am, no. The laws of humanity compel me to take that steamer in tow," said the captain, beginning to spoon his egg afresh.

"Humanity!" echoed Mr. Jansen, with a sneer, but in a soft voice, to Mrs. Mowbray, at whose side he sat. "Depend upon it, the Brazilian is a rich ship, or there would not be much humanity. Humanity as a cargo does not pay, whether you stow it or whether you tow it."

He nodded, in vindictive measures of head, at the lady, whose cap saluted him, in ironic acquiescence in his views.

"I rather like the idea of Rio, do you know," said Mr. Matthews. "I believe it offers the most beautiful picture in the whole world, and it would be a sight cheaply obtained by those who want to view it."

The captain bowed in approval.

"Who wants to view it," growled the Irresponsible "at the cost of a month's delay?"

"I want to know where *is* Rio?" shouted Mr. Redway, overlooking in his temper the obligations of regal antecedents.

"Fancy a man so very highly connected, you know, not knowing where Rio is!" said Mrs. Mowbray, scarcely *sotto voce*, and apparently addressing one of the swinging trays.

The captain believed that this gentleman, whom he had delivered from the perils of the sea, which began with a washstand, was mocking him, and again took no notice.

"Don't you know where Rio is, Mrs. Ramsay?" inquired Mrs. Mowbray, whose expression of face this morning was extremely frosty, with its owner's habitual winter of discontent.

"Did you, before you were told?" responded Mrs. Ramsay, with a pecking motion of her head, like a hen.

"Captain," cried Mr. Redway, in imperious tones, "as an invalid, I request that you will inform me where this Rio is, where you are going to tow the broken-down steamer to?"

"It is evident," said Mr. Matthews, smiling at the little skipper, "that the gentleman has never dabbled in Brazilian securities."

"It is the principal port of Brazil, sir," answered Buzacott, with a vacant stare past Mr. Redway, which made you think of a man's expression of face in moonshine; "and about eight hundred miles distant from the place where this ship is."

"Had I originally embarked in this ship," exclaimed Mr. Redway, warmly, "I should have contracted, and the conditions would have involved heavy penalties, that the master of the vessel did not touch at any port calculated to develop tuberculosis."

"It won't do it. It won't do it," answered the little skipper, peevishly. "Rio's a big sight sweeter than the Isle of Dogs, and you would have embarked there if it hadn't been Gravesend, which is more unsweetened still."

He finished his egg and cut a piece of tongue, and ate rapidly with a wooden face.

"I believe the editor of the *Times* will one day come to hear of this," observed Mr. St. Clair, across to his wife.

"Eight hundred miles!" echoed the wife, timidly. "Why, the Cape of Good Hope can't be further off, and that's halfway to Australia."

The captain ate voraciously and deafly.

"There are people more interested than the editor of the *Times* in the affairs of the sea," said Mr. Jansen. "They was known by the name of shipowners, and the owners of this ship, in due course, will receive my protest and my terms of time allowance for cash."

As the letter "s" was frequent in this speech, it was delivered with the hissing of an irritated goose. Buzacott, emptying his mouth by swallowing a drench of tea, stood up and said—

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is not a question of profit but of humanity, and I am bound, by every tradition of the red flag under which we sail, to help those, no matter of what nationality, who are in distress at sea when I fall in with them."

And so saying he quitted the table, and ascended the companion-ladder with such dignity as you would have thought impossible in so contemptible a figure.

Some of the passengers looked as though they felt abashed. The Irresponsible exclaimed—

"Before the captain proceeds, I am for appealing to him through the medium of a round robin, a copy of which must be preserved. Who will draw it up?"

As this person was not popular and considered decidedly vulgar by the ladies, his remarks engaged nobody's attention.

"I thought this Rio was in Africa," said Mr. Redway, addressing Dr. Macpherson. "Is it a fit place for me to be taken to?"

"You are as sound as I am," answered the Scotchman. "You needn't go ashore; in fact, I doot if the captain will allow anybody to go ashore."

"That will be damnable," said the Irresponsible. "A fortnight or three weeks' delay, to put money, at a great inconvenience to ourselves, into the pockets of people we don't care a curse about, and not permitted to leave the ship for a drink ashore and a stroll, as if we were a brutal company of bally Dutchmen, who had signed on for a pound a month on the understanding that they were not to take up their wages, but to be booted out of their money and out of their clothes on their arrival! What do you think of it, Mr. Jansen?"

Two ladies left the table partly in disgust. Mr. Jansen, feeling for his pipe in his pocket, sauntered on to the quarter-deck.

"How are we going to pull that steamer when, even in a strong wind, we can scarcely move ourselves?" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, with a degree of petulance that should have proved a prophesy to any man but a lunatic who studied her with matrimonial intent.

"It will be a break, madam, a change of scene; it will rally the spirits and give us more cheerful hearts for the leagues of salt water which will stretch before us," answered Dr. Macpherson, good-humouredly.

"I suppose you are paid by time—that is, by the month?" sneered the Irresponsible. "*I* ain't."

The doctor left the table, and descended into the steerage to his cabin, whose atmosphere was malodorous

with the contents of a vast variety of coloured bottles on shelves, the whole being carefully corked up by a tightly screwed scuttle and a closed door. A quarter of an hour later the stewards were stripping the cuddy table.

The sailors of the *Crimson Banner*, under the direction of the mate, whose cries found hoarse echoes in the cavernous throat of the boatswain, were full of business, and the decks were as lively as though the ship was hauling into dock, with agitated relations tumbling aboard, officials elbowing about, and here and there a Jack already drunk and intolerable on the merits of a smuggled bottle. The clank of chain, sharp calls from the poop, the crowing of excited cocks, the throaty yelp of a coloured man at a brace, the greasy cat-call of a foreign windpipe at another brace, the castanet-rattle of the pawls of a winch, the sulky protest of trusses and parrels in labour, combined with the sobbing wash of the sea alongside, the sullen thump of canvas abruptly incurved to the mast, the rude bawling from the taffrail to the steamer and the responses in Portuguese emphasized by a flicker of arms convulsive with dumb-show—filled the air with sounds so distracting that, had the ship sprung a leak and the carpenter with a white face reported ten foot in the hold, the scene of apparent confusion could not have been more bewildering to the land-going eye. A very great deal had to be done, and the man was right who predicted that the doing it would fill the day from sun to sun. The job of taking a crippled ship in tow, even by a steamer, is troublesome in fair weather, dangerous and difficult in heavy weather, and no matter under what sort of sky, is a problem whose solution is more or less a masterstroke of nice seamanship.

The *Crimson Banner* was a sailing vessel, as we know; she was to be manœuvred by a stern-board and one or two [illegible] of the marine evolutions to enable her to take up a

position to send and receive the links which were to yoke her to the Brazilian. Buzacott's obligation of humanity, to put the thing delicately, involved the lowering of a boat, the paying-out of heavy links of mooring-chain, the capture of the end of the Brazilian's wire hawser for the securing of a spring and the receiving of a bridle; likewise it involved much tremendous shouting, the airing of a variety of forecastle words, vigorous exchanges of personal ill-feeling, and transient but deep-shouted resentment; even the skipper, who never swore aloud, was pricked in the chest by the bayonets of a suppressed armoury of oaths over the crass imbecility of the behaviour of the Portuguese, their cursed ignorance of the English tongue as spoken by sailors, their exasperating, procrastinating methods.

The luncheon-hour arrived, and the hubbub of a yokedom in its making filled the blue breeze-swept atmosphere with the clamours of a squall. The dinner-hour arrived, and the two ships still remained uncoupled. The spirit of mutiny ran high among the passengers. Mr. Jansen had called a council of the Irresponsible and three others to consider what steps should be taken to avert the delay that was threatened by the captain's insolent pretensions as a humanitarian. This council arrived at several conclusions, none in the smallest degree operative or in any way effective. First, it agreed that the ship would occupy a month, at least, in towing the steamer to Rio. Next, it was cocksure that when once Buzacott had got hold of Paulo Roderigue's tow-rope, he was not likely to let go of it on any account whatever, not even if the most full-powered steamship afloat should present herself, and offer to take the Australian liner's place. Nothing, in short, was likely to force Buzacott to let go of Paulo with his ship and his specie, unless it were a gale of wind, which the council hoped to God would come

on to blow with as much fury as was consistent with the council's safety. The council was of unanimous opinion that the Brazilian steamer was upwards of two thousand tons gross, and about fifteen hundred tons net register, that her engines with one boiler were about three hundred nominal horse-power, and that the ship with the gold and the goods in her could not be assessed, roughly speaking, in round numbers at less than between forty and fifty thousand pounds, of which probably seven thousand would be awarded to the owners, and five thousand to Buzacott and his ship's company according to ratings, which was to be pocketed in the name of humanity, whilst the passengers were to get nothing but vexation, delay, and probably several kinds of illness; for Rio Janeiro might be considered by some as a beautiful natural harbour; but it did stink in parts, as most places do over which the Portuguese or their kinsmen hoist their nasty bilious flag; and who was going to say that this ship, which was now healthy, was not going to proceed on her voyage from Rio with the plague on board?

"Besides," said Mr. Jansen, hissing his syllables, "there was another very grave and serious point to be taken into consideration. Great Britain was at peace mit Brazil and Venezuela, and the securities of these two countries was held largely by English buyers. What would the Venezuelan Government think when she learned that a British ship had assisted her enemy by helping a disabled Brazilian man-o'-war to reach her port? It might result in Venezuela declaring war against Great Britain, and then Cott help Captain Buzacott! for I have good reason to know that the Government of Great Britain make things ferry hot for shipmasters who meddled with politics."

By the time the two ships were wedded the sun hung low over the sea, and magnificently draped the marine bridal party with cloth of burning gold. Throughout

the day the breeze had shifted, sunk, sprung up afresh in the north, again sunk, sprung up afresh once more north-west, and then hung steady in a violet surface of dog's-eared lines of brine, which ran with the multitudinous music of a land of waterfalls, and filled the hot atmosphere, shrouded but not cooled by the awning, with sweet gushes of air, soft, if not scented, as the winnowing of a fan in the quick and sportive hand of a girl. The yards of the *Crimson Banner* were braced up; the tall masts leaned a little from the wind; her metal entry smote the tropic leap of salt into a lift and fall of seething cream; the tow-rope strained; the bight of the coir-spring rose its curve to the blue surface between, and hissed to the drag; the steamer's bow came round, and you saw the wheel, with its backing of yellow funnel, revolving like the driving cycle of a locomotive with the efforts of two men stationed at it to "meet her."

Captain Buzacott eyed his tow in the posture of Napoleon surveying the remote horizon of liberty and despotism from the altitude of a St. Helena peak; he eyed her, I say, with folded arms, slightly crooked right leg, rather hung head, and eyes, alive with the unconscious low-comedy individuality of the little man, dwelling in a stealing way under his scarcely drooped eyelids upon the yawing hull astern of him. Spite of her submerged screw the *Dom Pedro* was not to steer so badly, after all. She kept her wheel going up and down, 'tis true, but the glance of her bow from port to starboard was not so sudden and obstinate as to jeopardize the straight and true course of the sailing-ship, and in amicable bondage the two vessels slided slowly over the darkling breast of ocean, on into the deepening shadow of the evening that, in those latitudes, droops in sudden night, star-laden, and at this hour graced with a crescent brooch of moon, in chase of the sun, the memory of whose foundered beam

lingered, even when the stars were shining, in suffusion of faint and dying scarlet upon the topmost canvas, and in a faint red gleam where the metal of the dog-vane caught it.

The passengers were for the most part sulky, mutinous, and uneasy. The night came, and they beheld, stalking in their wake, the skeleton spars and funnel of a spectre, whose proximity they interpreted as a menace of collision when they should be abed. A group would assemble on either quarter, and stare at the looming phantom, who stared back with a green and a red eye, which sometimes was a green eye only and sometimes a red eye only, when the bows yawed a little extravagantly, and fetched the salt sweat from the brows of the helmsmen. She showed no lights but the lights which a steamer shows when she is in tow, and the sailing-ship exhibited her side-lights only, not heeding whether they were statutory or not, for in those comparatively recent days of ambling, the compass-lamp, hastily snatched from its nest in the binnacle-hood and flourished over the bulwark rail, was deemed beacon, signal, or warning enough to keep an iceberg off, let alone the squall which was sometimes mistaken for land, the keel-up wreck which was sometimes charted as an island and a British possession, or the ship which was sometimes confounded with a flaw in the fog.

"I tell you what," said Mr. Jansen, in the heart of a little mob, in tones destined by the speaker to catch the ear of the captain to windward, "if the wind should suddenly draw ahead and take us aback, the momentum that steamer has will bring her into us, and she will cut us down like a knife in cheese, and then good night and Cott help us, for I have not observed any boat-drill in this ship, and I dare say there are no plugs ready, and if there was breakers they was empty; and they call jokes of this kind humanity."

"What do you think of it?" said Mrs. Ramsay,

whose arm was in Mr. Redway's; for when on deck they regularly paced the plank arm-in-arm, he lordly, she swimming, and the people being used to them, took no notice, though Mrs. Mowbray still hoped that some scheme, yet ungenerated, would operate where they were or where they were going.

"She ought to be towed three times as far off," answered Mr. Redway, who, having owned a yacht (in his eye), and having sailed with many distinguished noblemen in their yachts (all in his eye likewise), was considered by Mrs. Ramsay to be an authority on practical seamanship.

"The captain should be made to do what you say," said Mrs. Ramsay. "If you think we are in danger, we *are* in danger, and our lives are too precious to be trifled with."

"I shall certainly sue the owners," said Mr. St. Clair, who, standing near the couple, had overheard Mrs. Ramsay's remark. "Detention by deviation is bad enough, Heaven knows, but to be run down by a cursed Portuguese—— I have children in this ship—I have a wife. By God, Mr. Beauclerk, she looks to be aboard of us as she comes!"

Thus delectably flowed the conversation amongst the passengers on this the first evening of that passage of towing. But the people did not need to rise next morning to discover that little Buzacott was in grim earnest. In a word, to use the language of trade, he had no "option." It is true, indeed, that he might have inhumanly sailed past the disabled steamer and left her to her fate—and the fate of the sea in those days was a darker and a more recurrent form of suffering than it now is, when the horizons of every ocean are gloomy with smoke, and when a dismantled or helpless hulk must be in a very queer out-of-the-way part of the globe indeed not to be fallen

in with by something with a funnel or a mast glad and prompt to assist. Buzacott had a name to lose, and the reputation of his ship stood high. Mr. Jansen might sneer, but, as a matter of fact, the captain of the *Crimson Banner* was bound by every law of humanity, bound by obligations which do not appeal in vain even to the business bosom sterilized of all sentiment by the neutralizing influence of the ledger, to tow the Brazilian to a port, or, failing that, to stand by her till active help should come.

So the towage went on, and the wind was in favour of human virtue, and for many days blew pleasantly, shifting often, but never fulfilling the expectations of the mutinous among the passengers by rising to any degree of violence; on the contrary, day after day the people came on deck before breakfast and after, and found their good ship swelling her heights in tender ardency of tugging, and saw the helpless Brazilian, like a lean and hungry mongrel at the heels of one whose face it has perused and knows by dog-instinct to be an enemy to famine, whether decorated by a tail or whether erect on two legs, following submissively with sheepish yawing of bows in the close of the short length of wake. The flag of Brazil flaunted its bilious symbol at the ensign-staff, whose truck was a gilt crown, and punctually at sunrise one of the four little midshipmen on board the *Crimson Banner* bent on the British merchantman's flag and hoisted it to the extremity of the mizzen-peak, where it did not, indeed, "terrific burn," though it could not fail to inspire in some who looked at it a retrospect of maritime bravery always conspicuous in the national history of our island, when the full-bosomed topsail of the frigate or the line-of-battle ship wantonly coaxed the heavily armed but silenced enemy's waggon into the arms of the British prize-master.

But this tale of a tow has no further bearing upon

this story than that it gave conventional expansion to the matrimonial girdle whose limitations have been defined by Mrs. Grundy; so that any shrinkage short of twelve months is regarded by what is called society as devastating to the social claims of the people who prove themselves indecently eager and in too great a hurry; whilst to a lower order of the community, to the dwellers in courts and blind alleys (such is the severity of propriety amongst the poor), that a marked narrowing of the matrimonial horizon, as defined by sociologists, does often end, for the rash and rakish couple, in a honeymoon of stones and broken windows, as may be collected from reports of the proceeding in police-courts from day to day, published at one penny and at one halfpenny.

Therefore I pass over this business of towing the Brazilian, the threats, the sulkiness, the appeal, the protests, the darkling issueless schemes, the affected terrors of plague and poison which attended it,—that we may come to one morning, exactly three weeks from the date on which our Australian ship encountered the Brazilian chasing the Venezuelan clipper, and hear the strange cry of "Land ho!" delivered by a hoarse sailor who happened to be at work with a marline-spike on the fore-topgallant yard.

CHAPTER XVIII

BUZACOTT IS HONOURED

During this passage of what Mr. Jansen defined in his hissing way as vitiating deviation, and others as detention, the reader will probably want to know how Mr. Redway did, how his lung was, whether he was once visited by even a dim elusive recollection of his wife, from whom he had parted tearless though grieving, whose kind and thoughtful hand had, by presentation of a lifebuoy, consigned another man to an immature tomb.

To begin with his lung: Dr. Macpherson assured him that he was well, that he did not need to give himself any further concern about tuberculosis, microbes, bugs, bacilli, "and the like of such rubbish." In short, the worthy Scotchman accepted him as well all over, which diagnosis involved a psychological as well as physiological opinion, so extremely rational was Mr. Redway's lunacy. You would think that blood, oxygenated by weeks of ocean air, blowing sweetly, freely, freshly from the illimitable recesses of an ever-accompanying circle, would have helped the unhappy man's brains and given him the strength to think aright, particularly in the absence of intoxicating agents and morbid poisons. You would look for an induction of healthy activity, which must finally triumph over the perversion of his mind. His aberration was due to some local affection, traceable to the nerve-shock of the wreck and his hours of agony in the washstand.

Yet it may be that his functional disease, so to term it, was rendered obstinate by those very conditions which should have mended them; for had he fallen ill, or had he sunk into a dying state, memory might have feebly put forth her feelers, and troubled the sparks amongst the cinders into a flame of sufficient power to illuminate the whole canvas of his past, just as (so it is said) to the drowning man the graves of time give up their dead, who live again in the gaze that death is glazing.

It will thus be seen that if Mr. Alexander Beauclerk Redway was well, or almost well, of his lung, according to the saying of Macpherson, he was still as unwell as ever he had been since the date of his reception on board the *Crimson Banner*, in respect of his brains. But nobody had the least suspicion that he was not the Mr. Beauclerk he represented himself to be: not even Mrs. Latimer; not even Mrs. Mowbray; though both these ladies were convinced that much of his talk was swagger, and would have given worlds to see him exposed and set down.

His hallucination was equable: as he began, so he proceeded. His memory was wonderfully tenacious in lies, his imagination unhealthily fertile. Distemper had reduced his mind to the state of a soil enriched by nastiness and rankly wealthy in overwhelming growths of gorgeous aspect. He was as one who can only write poetry when drunk; for when sane his mind had been as prosaic as the district in which he dwelt.

Mrs. Ramsay was very proud of him, very proud of her engagement to him, was seldom off his arm when on deck, and behaved at table when alongside of him, or in deck-chairs planted close, in a manner so suggestive of nudging and cuddling, as to increase the acidity of Mrs. Mowbray's corkscrew-like inspection, and to excite the virtuous resentment of Mrs. Latimer who, on more than one occasion, told Mr. St. Clair that as Mrs. Ramsay

could not possibly be less than forty years old, whilst the remains of her wretched old husband were still fresh enough to trouble her dreams, her behaviour in the presence of spectators was scarcely short of indecent, and to be deplored by all well-wishers of Australian women as a horrid type for home-bred English people to return and talk about.

It was not until the morning following the day when the cry of "Land ho!" fell from the masthead to the deck that the *Crimson Banner*, ~~with the Brazilian in tow,~~ sailed with a soft and favouring breeze into the magnificent harbour of Rio Janeiro. This port of four leagues of waters was splendid with the sunshine of a heavenly climate, and majestic with mountains sumptuously clad low down in verdure, and plantations of tropic vegetation in declivities richly enamelled with villages and houses and seats of romantic beauty, shaded by trees. On this gem of inland sea many islands reposed, and the water thronged their sleep with dreams of umbrageous shadows stirless in contemplation, like seers awaiting the visitation of the Divine impulse.

The bay this morning was covered with small boats, without decks, rigged as feluccas, and rowed by blacks swaying in figures of ebony, standing at immensely long oars or sweeps: and the scene was also alive with little canoes formed of trunks of trees, holding leaning shapes, fishing. Many ships were at anchor, steam and sail, with flags of half a score of nationalities, trembling at peak, staff-end, or royal-mast head. Afar towered the imperial peak of the Corcovado, and the sugar-loafed pile of the Pao de Assucar, and the flat top of La Gabia, the climbing pipes of the Organ mountains, whose cathedral matins and vespers are reverberated by the sky these noble heights support.

The *Crimson Banner* let go her anchor abreast of Fort

Ville Gagnon, and the released Brazilian, with a sheer of bow to the hard-over helm, swam sulkily to a distance from her, and then brought up to await the friendly offices of a tug. Two boats immediately arrived: one from the Fort, the other from the Custom House, and when Captain Buzacott related his story the bows were as profuse as those of which Nelson was the recipient when the Spanish swords were handed to him on board the two great prizes at St. Vincent.

"No, sir," was Buzacott's answer to the importunities of one or another of the passengers; "my stay here is short, too short to admit of any one going ashore but myself, who must report to the Consul and put in my claim, and then we're off; for in these roads marine productions develop quickly, and cover the sheathing and corrode the copper, and I don't mean to careen, sir, and I don't mean that this ship shall be slower than she was born to be."

And with that he entered his gig, which was manned by four midshipmen and two ordinary seamen, and away he went, leaving the passengers to entertain themselves as best they could with the view of the bay and the mountains, and to divert themselves with purchases of fruits, curios, and the like, from boats alongside.

"I don't regret not being able to go ashore," said Mrs. Ramsay, to Mr. Redway. "If the place is Portuguese, it is sure to be dirty, and the sooner we start again the better."

"The view from that mountain must be noble," said Mr. Redway, gazing in his lofty way at the Corcovado.

"What are the sights?" inquired Mrs. Ramsay, addressing a customs officer in dingy clothes, with a face like tallow stained with chocolate, and eyes as round as buttons, and dusky as an African's. He spoke English in a very broken manner, but his answer was intelligible and

delivered with grotesque courtesy, and the animation of a repulsive mask of face whose blood is fired by the white beauty and bronze hair of the Englishwoman, which Mrs. Ramsay certainly was, though born in Sydney.

"There is the Cathedral of Nossa Senhora da Gloria, which was hard to climb up to; a Misericordia and hospital, and a school for foundlings (which is much used); and the Royal Palace, and a big theatre, and the college of the Jesuits, and the palace of the Bishop, and the royal villa of Christovao."

The man recited these names as though reading from a catalogue.

"Common spectacles in every foreign port," exclaimed Mr. Redway, with some disdain, and a careful adjustment of his deportment, as though sensible that the eye of the customs man dwelt upon his slop trousers and general aspect of clothes.

"You have some beautiful drives, no doubt," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Exquisite!" responded the man, using the Portuguese word, and delivering the expression with a look of fervent admiration. "There is the ride to Tuscha, with splendid waterfalls, and the botanical gardens. And the ride alongside the aqueduct——" He was interrupted by Mr. Redway.

"And your women?"

The fellow hung in the wind, as though debating whether to make a wry face or kiss his hand; he returned no answer, and looked over Mr. Redway's shoulder at some distant object, which seemed to engage his attention.

"Is Rio a healthy place to live in?" inquired Mrs. Ramsay.

"Oh yes, very healthy. Just now there is small-pox, fever, and measles about. It is brought in ships which come here."

"Given to them, yon mean," said the mate, who stood hard by, and overheard this talk. "Why, your streets run in open sewers; you wallow in filth. You bury so as to convert skulls and bones into gravestones. They've got no chimneys, madam, and soap is as scarce as the barber found it. I took a bad illness in that sweet city, and my kidneys remember it to this day."

This was past the understanding of the customs man, but he saw contempt in the mate's face, and, with a sniff of rounded nostrils, walked off.

A student of mental physiology, acquainted with the state of Mr. Redway's mind, would have watched him with critical curiosity. Would the scene he was contemplating affect him in any degree as a revelation of the truth of his personal identity? Heretofore, dating from his rescue, he had been surrounded by the ocean, an unfamiliar, and, therefore, an unsuggestive arena. His passage of insanity had happened on board a sailing-ship, and the conditions of his life were so novel as to prove worthless as agents of restoration. All the faces about him were new, the conversation without anything indicative to his mind, and the modes and habits of life differing essentially from everything he had been used to ashore. But now he was viewing the land. Were there no inspirations for his distraught brain in the magnificent spectacle of mountain and foreshore, in the familiar shapes of houses and trees, in the forms and colours of gardens and plantations, in a fine schooner-yacht at anchor within a mile, in the lateen-rigged boats, darting flashes of sun-bright foam from their sharp and shapely entries?

It is painful to relate that the only issue of such contemplations as our unhappy friend's soul was equal to, was the hardening of his hallucination; the sight of the mountains seemed to increase the altitude of his swollen bubbles of imagination, and the fields, the woods, the

painted acclivities, the enamelled stretches re-echoing the thunderous blow of the wheeling breaker of the mighty Atlantic, were no more to his incogitative eye than they were to the careless and heedless gaze of the meanest-minded sailor aboard. In a few words, Mr. Redway's personal identity was effaced; he had ceased to reason as we, who deem ourselves sane, reason; as though you should say, in the language of a learned physiologist, "I am satisfied that I am the person to whom such and such experiences happened yesterday, or a month, or a year, or twenty years ago; because I am not only conscious at this moment of the ideas which represent those experiences, but because I recognize them as the revived representations of my past experiences." Mr. Redway had been deprived, by the violent shock his nerves had sustained, of functions capable of reasoning in that way. Yet why should not such hallucinations as his govern the mind and interpenetrate as much as remains of its sanity, as a novelist's individuality may exist in his creation of characters, though those characters may act, talk, and flourish in ways absolutely foreign to his own nature; or just as dreams may influence by confusing the understanding, as in the case of a lady who continually dreamt about passing events, and was so absolutely unable to distinguish between her dreaming and her waking experiences, that she would relate the former with implicit belief in them, and give orders based upon them, until corrected?

Meantime, whilst the captain was ashore, the ship was a busy show; many boats had come alongside, and the passengers were making purchases from them and laying in little comforts for the further voyage. The steward had received instructions from the captain, and was trucking heavily in edible commodities which were swayed aloft and on deck by yard-arm whips—great baskets of vegetables, great baskets of half-stifled cocks and hens, great

baskets of the fruits of the rich and generous Brazilian soil; in the midst of all which a boat, glittering with brass rowlocks and pulled by six seamen of the *Dom Pedro*, with Lieutenant Cardoza and Mr. Ian Maclachlan in the stern-sheets, swept alongside the gangway with gifts for the captain, mate, and passengers from the commander of the Brazilian tow; a handsome silver-mounted meerschaum pipe in a case for Captain Buzacott, with an eloquent letter of thanks in Portuguese, translated, under the commander's signature, by Mr. Maclachlan in a round Civil Service hand; several cases of champagne for the ladies, a number of boxes of fine Havana cigars for the gentlemen, and a four-pound box of choice tobacco for the mate.

Lieutenant Cardoza was all smiles and courtesy, bows to the ladies, bows to the gentlemen; and the Scotch engineer's face was full of gratitude and appreciation.

"It is very unfortunate that we are not permitted to go for a ramble ashore after so many weeks of salt water," said Mr. St. Clair to Mr. Maclachlan.

"You will be sailing immediately the captain arrives," answered the engineer, cautiously, with a glance aloft at the canvas, of which nothing had been furled but the royals and main-sail. "And suppose one of you caught an illness—there is too much exposed sewage yon for hailth—you would not remember us kindly as being the cause of much suffering and perhaps death before you arrived at Sydney."

"That would be true of any passenger going ashore from any ship," said the Irresponsible, who was one of the most mutinous amongst them all, and who had been going about telling everybody, even some of the sailors who heartily agreed with him, that "it was damned hard when a man who was a passenger, and had paid his fare, and who was brought to this blamed hole without so

much as being asked by your leave, not to be allowed to go ashore for a drink and a squint around, as if the cuddy folks were a lot of shilling a-monthers, who'd run if they were set free for five minutes."

When the *Dom Pedro's* boat returned to its parent, Mr. Jansen came out of the cuddy with a pen behind his ear, a sheet of paper in one hand and an ink bottle in the other. He stepped up to Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay.

"I should be glad," said he, "if you will be so goot as to sign this."

"What is it?" inquired Mrs. Ramsay, quickly putting her hands, one of which clasped a furled parasol, behind her, and viewing the paper as though the man was presenting a snake.

"It is a protest drawn up by me, and signed by a number of passengers, as you will see, to be conveyed by boat to her Brittanic Majesty's Ambassador at Rio, for transmission and report to the Home or Colonial Office, I do not know which, there to await issues," said Mr. Jansen, in a large and swelling way, which might have recalled Mr. Micawber's attitude on a memorable occasion.

Mrs. Ramsay took from her breast a delicate gold-framed pince-nez attached by a chain as fine as silk to a brooch which sparkled with three diamonds. She seldom used those glasses. Her sight was very good. But she thought the employment of them at long intervals gave a piquancy to her charms when the occasion demanded a spirit that was not readily producible by the lineaments nature had endowed her with; she also conceived that they supported her in protest, in resentment, or in any moral posture demanding firmness and dignity. She perched the frame upon her pretty nose and looked at the sheet which Mr. Jansen held up before her.

"No thank you," she said strongly and warmly, and

removing her pince-nez she looked at Mr. Redway and said, "It is signed by Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer."

"And others, I beg you to take notice," said Mr. Jansen.

"Not for the wealth of that country," said Mr. Redway, extending his arm in lordly gesture towards the teeming Brazilian foreshore.

"Besides," said Mrs. Ramsay, with a sort of lofty condescension unconsciously borrowed from the habit and deportment of her sweetheart, "it would be the flattest ingratitude for us to sign anything likely to injure the prospects of a man who has very strong claims upon us."

"Of course it would, my dear," said Mr. Redway, in a voice that must have betrayed the husband or the widower—anything, in short, but the bachelor—to the ear of a widow; but that "my dear," pronounced by lips practised in syllables which signify nothing in the marital mouth, passed unheeded by the infatuated lady.

Mr. Jansen shrugged his shoulders and left the couple, who conversed in reproach of him and of Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer for about five minutes, after which they quitted the deck for the cuddy, and ate purple grapes with the enjoyment of passengers to whom the goodly fruits of the earth have been long denied.

Captain Buzacott did not return to his ship until about half-past five in the afternoon, when he immediately gave orders for the windlass to be manned and the topsail-yards mastheaded. He was in high spirits, and stepped aboard with such a look of importance that you would suppose he had been converted into a Portuguese lord. The gaze of triumphant self-complacency might have been directed by eyes seated in a head at least six foot six above the deck. Morally speaking, he did not arrive on high heels, but on stilts. What had happened to him? The forefinger of his right hand, though

garnished with something which had not been visible before he quitted the vessel, could not of itself solve the problem of his exultation.

The truth is, the Emperor of Brazil happened to be in residence at his palace when the *Crimson Banner* floated into the leagues of Rio's spacious harbour with the Brazilian steamer in tow. The news had been conveyed to the palace, and the Emperor on hearing the story, sent a mounted officer to the offices of the British Consul, requesting his own and the attendance of the captain of the Australian liner at the palace. Little Buzacott was very graciously received by the humane and honourable gentleman who then graced that throne. He was thanked for the valuable services he had rendered, and presented with a very handsome ring which he afterwards found exactly fitted his right forefinger. With this bauble, and almost as majestic in mind as Mr. Beauclerk with imperial memory, the withered little low-comedy skipper gained the poop and gave his orders, elated not more by the sense that he had been complimented and honoured by an emperor than by the knowledge that he had done a good stroke of business by lodging his report with the consul and putting in a claim for salvage: things which must naturally run the little man high in the opinion of the owners of the ship.

He easily saw, however, in the countenances of the passengers, that they were dissatisfied, and he dealt with the difficulty as most sea-captains of good sense and practical experience would; he withdrew into himself and held aloof, and deprecated interviews and any sort of impertinence of interrogatory or comment by a stern and wooden attention to the business of getting under way.

Whilst this was doing, the passengers went to dinner, but Captain Buzacott remained on deck to watch and direct the movements of his ship. He had been fed well

ashore, and unlike Dr. Johnson, was in no passion to dine. The ship was got under way to the moving and melodious music of that sailor's chorus—

"Oh, Shanadoah, I love your daughter! Away! you rolling river!"

As gladdening to the pulse as the cup that both cheers and inebriates was that fine old tune of the sea to scores of British ears aboard British ships lying adjacent or some distance along. The red flag at the *Crimson Banner's* peak made that hoarsely delivered chantey as true in appeal, as heart-lifting in inspiration, as the thunder of cannon to the ears of the Briton when the ordnance speaks in blank cartridge or deadly projectile from sides whose decks lie white under the shadow of the white flag of Britannia. A pleasant soldier's wind was blowing: a fair wind for a ship inward or outward bound. The water ran in prisms and shook in jewels. The men of the Brazilian steamer manned the bulwark rail, as her pole masts yielded no shrouds fit for crowding, and in Portuguese *vivas*, or in triumphant shouts which sounded like *vivas*, they cheered the outward-bound ship, whilst the Portuguese flag was thrice dipped in grateful and graceful recognition: a courtesy which Buzacott instantly summoned a midshipman to return, and the commercial flag of our country was lowered and raised thrice by a youth in brass buttons, helped by a similar youth in brass buttons, both of whom felt uncommonly tight in the regions of their belts with fruit and candies and cocoanuts.

The ship was a picture of the grace of vanished times as she broke out her own anchor and rounded with the powdered dignity of a handsome lady of quality moving slow in some ancient measure to the music of the spinet, the hautboy, and fiddle: her jibs swelled, her square canvas rounded, the royals breathed in breasts of snow under the trucks, the light of the sun flashed in brass and glass in similitude of the crimson glances of complimentary

artillery, the water framed the stem in curves of ripples fine as pianoforte-wire spun in gold, and the flags upon the ships and the flags upon the forts trembled slowly along the green background of the land. The lakes, the crowned peaks, the white sand beaches, the broken crag-laden hills as soft to the eye in their verdure, bathed by the westering sun, as the moist and melting bosom of a huge, scarce-sailing cloud, the airy vegetation, the sweet glimpses of half-embowered houses, the lines of rolling glory along the margin: these and how much more, slowly passed in a vision of spacious magnificence, mountain-thronged, dyed by a heaven of exquisitely tender blue, reflected by miles of liquid brine whose lights were as beautiful as the meteoric lances, the blues, the crimsons, the greens, the diamond whites of the celestial lamps of the night.

Captain Buzacott still walked the deck when the passengers ended dinner. As usual, some of the men went on the quarter-deck to smoke, and the ladies rose through that marine stage-trap called the companion-hatch, and scattered in ones and twos, all viewing with emotions not readily gatherable, for we know nothing of what passes in one another's mind, the splendid scene their ship was giving her stern to. Mr. Jansen came up the starboard poop-ladder and hung in the wind whilst, with his head slightly drooped towards his right shoulder, he stood gazing aft at the figure of Buzacott, who still walked the deck alone. After a brief interval of hesitation the Scandinavian walked along the deck to the captain and exclaimed—

"May I have a few words mit you, Captain Buzacott?"

It may here be remarked that when Mr. Jansen was in any degree agitated he deformed his English by interpolations of consonants, which, with his sibilant

enunciation, rendered his expression of mind peculiarly foreign.

"What have you to say, sir?" inquired Captain Buzacott, who was still inwardly swelled with a sense of personal pomp and importance due to his admission into a Presence.

"It is right," said Mr. Jansen, "I should inform you that I have drawn up a remonstrance against your deviation and detention of over three weeks. This has been extensively signed by some of the passengers, and it has been sent to her Majesty's Ambassador at Rio."

Captain Buzacott snapped his eyes.

"What is this to me?" he inquired, darkly grieving that this man was not a foreign sailor before the mast, to whom he could serve out leg-irons, broken biscuit a-crawl, and the malodorous water of the scuttle butt.

"It may be a goot deal to you when you get home," was the impudent reply.

"I suppose you know who I am?" said Captain Buzacott.

"I do, sir; at a cost of three weeks' loss of time."

Some passengers adjacent began to listen, amongst them were Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay.

"I do not wish to exert my powers as master of this ship," exclaimed Captain Buzacott, in the croaking note of a marsh frog, "but I would have you to know, sir, that I can deal with you——"

"On seventy guineas passage-money, not counting extras," sneered Mr. Jansen. "Perhaps you will cause me to be refunded for three weeks' loss of time."

"I am not here to be insulted, sir," cried the little skipper, with the blood red as the flush of sunset in his face. "I would advise you to attend to your own business, and to leave me to attend to mine."

"There are others," said Mr. Jansen, looking round

him, "you will ask to attend to their own business, also, for they have given some heet to yours."

Mrs. Ramsay came sailing up to the couple.

"Captain Buzacott," she exclaimed, in a voice that was melody after the hiss of the Scandinavian and the croak of the withered old shell; "I beg to inform you that neither I nor Mr. Beauclerk signed the statement which this gentleman drew up."

She accentuated the word "gentleman" by a note of derision, and managed to make her contempt of him more unpleasant by not noticing him.

"I am obliged to you, madam. I am obliged to Mr. Beauclerk," said Buzacott, convulsing his figure with a bow. "I must beg Mr. Jansen to mind his own affairs, or he may compel me to exert my authority as commander of this ship."

As he spoke, the mate, who had been holding a short conversation with the boatswain, who had stepped half-way up the poop-ladder to address the officer, came along and blundered in, for you can make an Irish bull by your interruption without the brogue, and O'Gormon was the man to show how this may be done. He touched his cap and said—

"I have to report a man missing, sir."

"Who is it?" inquired the captain, swiftly and passionately.

"The able seaman named William Barber, sir."

"The man that this gentleman mesmerised," said the captain, pointing to Mr. Jansen, and keeping his arm straight out with his fist levelled at Mr. Jansen's nose, as though he was a down-hill road-post-warning to cyclists.

"Yes, sir. One of his pals told the bo'sun that the man's run for no other reason than to sue this gentleman for five quid and the value of a glass of grog, and for time spent as serving as a subject, as Mr. Jansen calls it."

"The idiot!" hissed Mr. Jansen. "Sue me! I vish the dirty little beast may get it."

Mrs. Ramsay laughed like an actress in a farce, and she showed her teeth and dimpled her cheeks as an actress does when she can, but without the faintest expression of mirth in her eyes.

"You've given trouble enough, sir," said the captain to Mr. Jansen. "I have to thank you for the loss of a man. My ship's company is weakened by an infamous art that excited blasphemies on this deck. I would advise you not to interfere with me, or to attempt any further encroachments on the discipline of this ship."

He snapped the thumb and forefinger of the hand he let fall, and walked away, and looked into the binnacle stand.

Mr. Jansen, talking to himself, stepped over to Mr. St. Clair, and spoke rapidly, with many gesticulations. Mrs. Ramsay returned to Mr. Redway, and they conversed, laughing often. Mrs. Mowbray, who was sitting, with a pair of knitting-needles, and the half of a child's sock, in a deck-chair, rose, and approached the captain.

"Did you see the Consul, Captain Buzacott?" she inquired.

"I do not know why you ask that question," replied the captain, who was summoning every nerve in him to control his wrath.

"I merely wished to ascertain," said the lady, "in the interests of Mr. Beauclerk, whether you mentioned to the Consul that you received him from the French yacht."

"Mr. Beauclerk is vastly obliged to you, I am sure, for the interest you take in him," said Buzacott, as sarcastically as his bubbling temper permitted.

"How on earth," cried Mrs. Mowbray, "are his relations at home to know that he is safe and sound if the fact of his rescue is not reported?"

Captain Buzacott stared at her in silence.

"Did you mention the circumstance to the Consul?" persisted Mrs. Mowbray.

"I did not," replied the captain; "and I don't know in what way you are concerned in the matter, madam."

"But why didn't you?" said Mrs. Mowbray, with a gaze acrid with suspicion and malignant curiosity.

"My God!" cried the captain, forgetting himself. "Am I to be stopped from looking after my own ship?"

And he hurried forward on twinkling legs, and engaged himself in rapid and angry discourse with Mr. O'Gormon.

CHAPTER XIX

A PASSAGE OF CANDOUR

THE latitude of Sydney, New South Wales, is some degrees more south than that of Rio Janeiro, some degrees only; and if a ship could fetch Sydney by heading south, her passage would not be long. But, unfortunately, the run from Rio to Sydney covers a multitude of degrees of longitude. The journey in a steamer is lengthy, in sail often distractingly tedious. It is possible that the passengers of the *Crimson Banner* may have been visited, and oppressed, by the sense of distance and its inevitable concomitant at sea, I mean ocean-peril, when on the morrow following the ship's departure from the Brasilian port they found the land out of sight, the mighty familiar girdle of brine round about them, the ship lonely in the centre of the vast salt disc that swept along with her as she went, lifting the white foam to her nostril-like hawse pipes, and leaning from a fresh breeze to which she had furled her royals and mizzen-togallant sail, whilst her wake, that was a riot of lights flashing and fading as the darts of the sun were swerved or freed by the eclipsing breasts of stemming cloud, ran like froth falling under sponsons into the windy blue in a broad road that rose and fell.

All, even Mr. Jansen, felt, now that the ship was again at sea, that her captain was a person of supreme importance. The most worthless sailor aboard understood *that*; how should the educated passenger fail to grasp the fact?

They would know that their lives were in the keeping of that man; their own, and the lives of the children and the rest of the little lot of people who lived aft, and who lived forward. Small as he was, he was a giant in the palm of whose hand lay his ship as a toy. He had detained her and delayed the outward passage by more than three weeks. If he could do that, how much more was it in his power to do? He might resent indignity by wrecking her, for who in that ship was to say nay to his command?

This proposition was submitted by Mr. Matthews to Mr. Jansen after breakfast next morning, when the land was out of sight; and Mr. Jansen had answered—

"Yes; but self-interest, and the love of life are factors you must reckon with in considering the behaviour of captains of merchant vessels. He had no right to detain us, but I am for letting bygones be bygones now that my statement, signed by several, is in the hands of the British ambassador."

"How do you know that what you call our detention has not happened for the best?" said Mr. Matthews. "We have not heard of any hurricane, it is true; we have not heard of the sharp-prow'd steamer that cuts ships down. There is much, of course, that is dim in conjecture and potential only to foresight; but all the same," he continued, with a solemn face and a solemn voice, "you shall not tell me with positive assurance that over three weeks' delay has not proved the instrument of our salvation; that it has not rescued us from the hurricane which would have sunk us had we sailed into it, from the bows of the steamer that would have cut us down, or from any other sea peril, which by any possibility may have been within the limits of the distance which the ship would have traversed in three weeks."

Mr. Jansen shrugged his shoulders and sucked his pipe, whilst he watched Mr. Matthews climb the poop-ladder,

and thought to himself, "That was a man to believe in the devil and in ghosts."

But what is more immediately to the point which I am endeavouring to elucidate and to interest you in, is this: down to the hour of the *Crimson Banner's* sailing from Rio, Mr. Redway's safety, so far as we know, was unreported. It might have been that Captain Buzacott made no doubt that the news would be transmitted more swiftly by the Count, from whom he had received Mr. Beauclerk, than he could have managed to convey by signalling. But even if this were not so, it will be seen that Buzacott had fallen in with nothing fit to carry the intelligence home. It had not entered his head to mention the matter to Captain Skull, and the idea of Mr. Beauclerk was no part of his mental cargo when he went ashore at Rio with his head full of his tow and claims for salvage, in the eager communication of which he was interrupted by the arrival of a gilded messenger on horseback with a command from the palace.

Meanwhile, had nothing happened, was nothing to happen, qualified to excite recollection in the mind of Mr. Redway? On more than one occasion Mrs. Ramsay mentioned the name of the Chevalier Albert Garcia, and in recounting some of her musical experiences to Mr. Redway, she dwelt in vivid phrase and at some length upon the person of this man, his singular skill as a conductor of orchestra, his sound knowledge of music, his incomparable art in the communication of it, the excellent quality of his voice, and his masterful command of the instruments he played, and she wound up her panegyric by exclaiming—

"It is so extraordinary to me that you should not be the man I once saw at his house, for it seems impossible that two persons should so closely resemble each other."

Now the idea or memory of the Chevalier Garcia was

as comatose in the particular cell it was lodged in in Mr. Redway's brain, as a person is functionally dead when drugged into stupor. There was no promethean spark in the lambent fires of Mrs. Ramsay's words which should have burnt, to kindle life in the dead, or, if you please, the cataleptic idea of Garcia in Mr. Redway. He had never heard of him; he looked blankly, as a man who does not know what you are talking about. He saw nothing to marvel at in two men being regarded as exactly alike in appearance; in fact (and this was a lie) his friend Lord Dallyfin so closely resembled in trim of beard and general appearance of face an opulent stockbroker of Spanish extraction, named Antoni Edward Contango, that Mrs. Contango, who was in the habit of taking the air in the park, was known, not less than three times, certainly, to have kissed her hand to his lordship, under the impression that he was her husband.

It was quite evident, indeed, that something more than mere pronunciation of names was to prove useless to Mr. Redway's mental disorder. For example, Mrs. Ramsay spoke on an occasion of a toy terrier she once possessed and dearly loved. At Montmârtre it flew at a great dog, which a hulking Frenchman, its owner, instantly picked up, with a loud cry of alarm, and hugged to his bosom for safety, at the same time kicking the toy terrier with a heavy boot, which burst the poor little dog's liver, and it died three days afterwards in a room which it filled with screams of anguish. You will remember that Mrs. Redway possessed a senile toy terrier, and there was a time when Mr. Redway had been perfectly conscious, throughout his home-keeping hours of the day, of the brute's existence; yet Mrs. Ramsay's reference to her dog in no wise recalled his wife's dog to Mrs. Ramsay's sweetheart. A mental fog had rolled down, and Mrs. Redway and her dog were deep buried in it—sunk in one of those phenomenal mists

or hazes which yet suffer the visionary eye to obtain clear glimpses of inconsequential objects near and remote. This is the state of madness which tells lies, to whom memory is the fraudulent auxiliary of imagination, though faithful in its dishonourable processes.

It will be understood, however, that Mr. Redway's hallucinations were prodigiously assisted, supported, and hardened by Mrs. Ramsay's desire that he should be, her predetermined conviction, in short, that he was, all that he represented. Her dreams were of York Manor, the royal bed on which Mr. Beauclerk lay when at home, the courtly or kingly ancestors who gazed down upon him from time-darkened canvases. She made nothing of his neglect of his relations in the sense that he was perfectly heedless as to whether they should come to hear of his safety or not. She found a cause for his indifference in habit of thought, and there was also no reason why, because he was a man of noble and even royal descent, he should not be detached and live isolated, with little or no communication from his relations, though they should be as numerous as the grains of wheat in a ripe corn-field. He was accustomed to think of himself as Mr. Beauclerk, a close kinsman of the Duke of St. Albans, and she had found by experience that the men who value themselves highly on the merits of a title are not the people who are born into dignities, but who have risen out of sordid obscurity into them, and therefore she accepted Mr. Beauclerk's easy references to his noble friends and to his own social condition as the habit of life from the cradle.

Not long after the ship had sailed from Rio, the two were sitting in deck-chairs side by side. The gyrations of the earth had made it afternoon, as the captain with his sextant makes the sun eight bells. It was a brilliant scene, spacious as the atmosphere, and frolicsome with leaping lights, and the ship sailed along lonely and pleasantly

with sweet hymns of the wind in her weather-taut rigging and her canvas swelled white to the accompaniment of the soft diapason of waters breaking in music.

"I suppose a day will come," said Mrs. Ramsay, "when it will be as strange to meet people who have not visited Australia, as it is now strange to meet people who don't know Paris or Brussels."

"It is a long way off," answered Mr. Redway. "What are the enticements? At Paris you have hats and bonnets," he continued, with a rise of eyebrow which rendered his expression arch and knowing; "and Brussels stands as a monument of the cowardice of the Belgians at Waterloo. But what have you in Australia?"

"Wait till you see Sydney. Wait till you have visited the Botanic Gardens," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Have you any birds in Australia?" asked Mr. Redway.

"Some of the most beautiful and original-looking creatures in the whole world," she answered with fervour —"large white cockatoos with orange toppings; parrots which fly in flashes of brilliant colours; the laughing jackass—a sort of huge woodpecker in black and grey, with a head and bill which make him the Daniel Quilp of the forest; organ-magpies, whose song is low and sweet like the breathing of a flute. I could tell you of dozens more."

"What do they give you to eat, my dear?" said Mr. Redway, in his exalted manner.

"Ah, that question is always one of first-rate importance to you men," she replied, with the light of the gaiety in her heart beaming in the eyes she fixed on him. "I will start by giving you a plate of Wallaby-tail soup. Then a boiled schnapper, with oyster-sauce. Then a cut of a haunch of Kangaroo venison, to be followed by the wing of a wonga-wonga pigeon, with bread-sauce; pies

and sweets as you please; and as for dessert, the table shall be loaded with plaintains and loquots, guavas and mandarine oranges, passion-fruit and pomegranates and cherimoyas. Are such dainties choice enough for you, Alexander?"

"Talking of kangaroos," answered Mr. Redway, who had barely been heeding her whilst his diseased and unaccountable imagination was in labour with the invention to which he was now to give birth, "reminds me of a story an officer once told me. He was somewhere in Tasmania, and killed a kangaroo of such enormous bulk that the mass of the body was useless to him, and he was forced to hire a waggon to carry away the tail, which alone weighed five hundred and eighty pounds. What did he call the beast?"

"Was it the boomah?" she inquired.

"I forget."

"He told you a falsehood. There is no tail of that size in the Colonies. There is none of that weight hanging to a kangaroo that ever I heard of," she answered. "What lies some men will tell! Merely to excite wonder, which is the same as applause to them."

"If ever I meet that man again," said Mr. Redway, gloomily, "I will ask him to repeat that story, and then call him a liar to his face. I make it a rule never to allow a man to impose upon me, if I can help it."

"There are stranger things in Australia," said Mrs. Ramsay, "than even our birds and beasts. We have natives."

"Let me see," said Mr. Redway, knitting his brows; "have we?"

"You have yokels, and hinds, and labourers as vacant of intelligence as the scarecrows they set up; who live upon onions, and ruin the beautiful tints of your autumns with the horrid fumes of couch fires—a savage, surly lot,

who, if their skin should be stained, and their natural hair frizzed in a curling machine, would be quite as frightful as our aboriginals, with their boomerangs and skeleton legs. But our natives don't eat onions," Mrs. Ramsay continued, wrinkling her nose, without somehow deforming the graces of her face. "They are as romantic in their taste as yours are disgusting with their fat bacon, which I have seen them eating on the edge of stagnant ponds, which even a hen's brood of ducklings would refuse to take to."

"What's the character of your native's kitchen?" asked Mr. Redway, with the abrupt expression of the insane in tongue and face.

"You mean what does he eat?" answered the lady, speaking in sympathy with the sudden vivacity, the cause of which it would have been well for her had she understood. "Anything—everything."

"Even a man, I believe," said Mr. Redway.

Her hand waved this off with a patriotic look of aversion, because it is a fact that, in spite of unimpeachable testimony, the typical Australian declines to believe that the primitive New Hollander is, or was, a cannibal.

"No," she exclaimed. "His food is good enough for a feast in a stage play. He lives on the kangaroo, the emu, and fish and wild fowl, on snakes and grubs and guanas, and white ants, and gum, and bulrushes, and honey, which—— How do think he finds it? He gums a bit of white down on to a bee, and follows its flight to the hole in the hollow tree where the hive is. He is a very clever fellow, and if you were to let him loose in England, he'd find dishes in pastures and by riversides, even in Roman remains and subterranean antiquities, where your village idiot can see nothing good to eat."

This was followed by a short pause. She had unconsciously raised her voice, and was sensible that her sentences had been overheard by Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. St. Clair, who were seated on the other side of the deck. Suddenly she said in a very subdued note—

"Has any one on board ever told you that I am the daughter of a convict?"

This was a startling question, and the psychologist, acquainted with the state of Mr. Redway's mind, must have watched, with impassioned critical inspection, the effect of the words upon the unfortunate man. He gazed at her steadfastly, with a countenance so inexpressive of sensation, that no man could have unriddled it. Why? Because it is quite certain that no rational sensations were excited. He viewed her as though he mused upon her charms rather than upon her thrilling disclosure, which had left her pale and nervous, with eyes downcast upon her fingers, which were in motion in her lap, as though she counted them.

"A convict!" he exclaimed. "That's odd. Almost a coincidence. A man who was once an intimate friend of mine, a brother of the Marquis of Robafarden, is serving out a considerable term at Portland."

This astonishing reception of her statement rallied her, as a drench of cold water pulls the hysterical together. She was instantly composed, smiling, with a rising tide of blood prettily tinting her cheeks and brightening her eyes.

"It depends a good deal upon what a man does," said Mr. Redway, with the gravity and the dignity of a judge addressing a jury. "I hold that a man may be a convict and yet be an honourable man of striking virtues. Many would have been glad to see the late Mr. Daniel O'Connell a convict."

"Your views are worthy of you—they are truly

splendid and noble," cried Mrs. Ramsay, in a note that owed its subdued music of hilarity to the leap of her relieved heart, and to her joy that he was now in possession of a secret that had been gnawing her under her bosom with an adder's fang.

"Men have been hanged and decapitated," said Mr. Redway, "for loving political and social liberty not wisely but too well. You could not call them murderers because they suffered the last penalty!" he added, with a look of suspicion.

"Certainly not!" she exclaimed.

"Men have been deported to your native land," he continued, putting on his grand air, "for no other reason than patriotism—than the lofty and ennobling desire to see the land of their birth freed from an intolerable vassalage. I need hardly say that I refer to Ireland," and he managed a bow with infinitely more dexterity of courtesy than his friend, the French Count, could have contrived.

She witnessed nothing in all this, but the magnanimity of a mind that owed its lofty views to Blood.

"I have not a shadow of doubt," he went on, with an air of self-complacency, as though he profoundly approved of his own ideas, and had struck a vein in which he was to excel, "that your father was a political sufferer."

She bowed her head in graceful acquiescence. She had been audacious, but she also knew how to limit audacity: and it might be for others—certainly not for her—to acquaint Mr. Beauclerk that her father had been transported, in days when small offences were fearfully visited, on an unromantic indictment for robbing a pawnbroker, to whom the parish—on whose hands he had been left—had apprenticed him.

"Besides, if you were tenfold a convict's daughter,"

said the infatuated lunatic, lisping in fondness, "could I cease to love one who has been so tender and good to me, and who has done me the honour to bestow her hand and gracious charms on me?"

She blushed a little and simpered. She was a widow, and too old a hand, and too shrewd—as a woman of considerable intelligence, liberally cultivated—not to taste a flavour of the drama in his words. But she liked his sayings: they were exactly what she could have desired him to utter; she wanted as much as she could possibly get of this sort of kindness from him, and the smile with which she attended to his delivery was delightful.

"After all," he exclaimed, after a short pause, and somewhat airily, "the question of convicts is entirely a matter of public opinion. Jones does not think well of me because my father was a convict. No matter how innately honourable my father might have been; no matter that he may have been betrayed—speaking from a legal point of view—into one of those blunders which are worse than crimes, by an excess of good qualities, a superabundance of virtue; Jones declines to think well of me. Now, as a matter of fact, the point is this: it is not what Jones thinks of me—the really serious consideration is what Jones thinks that I think of him. Viewed thus, the term convict is a negligible quantity in social computation, and may be prefixed or dropped *à discretion*."

His face was bland: his eyes seemed to have enlarged with benevolence. She secretly thought that he must exactly resemble one of the stateliest and most benignant of his ancestors at that moment. Which ancestor? In all probability Charles I., who may have looked so whilst he was exchanging a few memorable words with Bishop Juxon on the scaffold. Do you regard this as broad farce? I have admitted you behind the scenes, and you know that Mr. Redway is crazy. But Mrs. Ramsay sat

in front of the stage; the actor pleased her incomparably well. Her ambition had merged her reason into idealism, and her perception was as much confounded as his was. She was a woman with the weakness of a woman, and what she desired she determined to find; and what she got fitted her aspirations. If you know a man to be mad, you will find madness even in his sanity; but if you do not know him to be mad, it is fifty to one if he does not impress you with his pomp of words and flight of imaginations. I who write this, have, in my time, known a man who was mad all the while he conversed with me, and I had not the slightest suspicion that I was in the company of a madman, until one day news reached me of his detention in a lunatic asylum, whence, though a corpse, he was carried to his home bound in cords: then by this light I interpreted his past, and with wonderful cleverness discovered that he had been mad throughout.

And this may prove true of Mrs. Ramsay, if we have patience, as it may be equally true of hundreds who may or may not read these lines.

The word "convict" having penetrated Mr. Redway's brain, as a bluebottle flies into a cobweb, much emotion was caused in that reticulated interior, there was much dust-flying and a considerable amount of buzzing.

"If I had been expatriated for a political offence," he observed, "I should consider it as due to myself to exhibit a splendid indifference and disdain of the opinions of others. May I venture to inquire the reason why your father was deported?"

"For fighting a duel," she answered. "The judge who tried him was determined to make an example, with an inane idea of putting a stop to the practice."

"No judge could stop me from avenging my wounded honour," said Mr. Redway, loftily.

"The sentence was monstrous," said Mrs. Ramsay,

with colour mounting through sheer effort of assumed indignation, so that the impersonation was conclusive. "Why did not they transport the Duke of Wellington and Lord Winchelsea, and Lord Cardigan and the Duke of York and the Duke of Richmond?"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Redway. "Why not, indeed? You have called over a noble roll. I, too, should have been transported."

"All the same," said Mrs. Ramsay, darting a glance at Mrs. Mowbray, "there are people in the colony who will snub you, not because you may be the son or daughter of a nobleman who was mercilessly and cruelly transported for accepting the challenge of a scoundrel, but as the offspring of a convict."

She sank her head and closed her period with a sigh; but the bluebottle of an idea was buzzing loudly to the imagination of Mr. Redway in its struggle to break loose, and the gentleman's attention was wandering. He frowned at her as one who has no knife wherewith to cut the knot of a problem.

"The question of mine and thine," he said, looking into her eyes as though he saw something through her head, "is very complex in this country." He seemed to forget that he was on board ship. "A man's fortune is the property of the world who preys upon it. Only consider how hard old Mr. Smith works. What awful responsibilities, moral, social, and commercial, old Mr. Smith will accept, merely to support twenty or thirty clerks with their wives and daughters, and old Mrs. Smith and her children, who cannot be strictly regarded as old Mr. Smith himself. All these people, to name no more, prey on old Mr. Smith's money, just as he preys upon them who yield to him in kind. I ask you how much of Mr. Smith's money belongs to his clerks and those who prey upon him? We talk of keeping a horse, but the

horse makes us work to keep him. You will admit that the horse spends no money himself, but he compels us to spend money on him. Therefore, a great deal of our money is his. What does he do in return? He pulls us about. Depend upon it, not only the law, but legal terms need revision. I maintain that larceny and such names are not carefully defined."

The degree of sanity in this reasoning I leave the reader to determine. Mrs. Ramsay listened to the logic of her lover with delight. The views he expressed were precisely those she wished him to hold, and again she glanced at Mrs. Mowbray with an expression of triumph in her eye. For though she could not possibly know that that disagreeable person had directed the attention of Mr. Matthews to her father's story in a printed book, she was perfectly conscious that her acid colonial sister knew all about her, and that her talent of defamation was virulent enough to cause the facts of Mrs. Ramsay's father's life to be submitted to Mr. Beauclerk, on any day before the ship reached Sydney, where stood the church in which she was panting to be made his wife.

"I suppose," said Mr. Redway, removing his eyes from what apparently had been a spell of meditation over the horizon, "I suppose—— May I ask your father's name?"

"Loveday," she answered.

"A pretty name!" he exclaimed. "A name suggestive of the new-born affection of the expatriated for the Antipodean sun. I was going to ask——" He hemmed, and it was manifest in his face that the bluebottle was buzzing very loud indeed in the web it had flown foul of. "Yes, I remember. Mr. Loveday's struggles must have been very arduous at the start."

"Very. And I will tell you the romantic secret of his success. It is quite a poem in its way. After he was

sentenced, my dear mother followed him, under an assumed name, and established herself at Sydney, and by such arts as a woman who deeply loves——" Mrs. Ramsay paused, sighed, and looked at Mr. Redway with glowing affection. "I was saying," she continued, "that my dear mother contrived to cause him to be assigned to her as a Government servant. Only think of it, Alexander! Afterwards he got freedom and money. And now, dear, you know the worst of me, and all!"

These were affecting words, and had the unfortunate man been sane, he must have been touched. On the contrary, with the air of a man who quits a subject that has been talked threadbare, he exclaimed.

"The bacon they serve for breakfast is as salt as the meat they supply to the sailors. I have been suffering from continual thirst since the morning. Shall I tell the steward to bring *you* something?"

She declined, and putting his head into the open skylight, he requested the steward to bring a glass of seltzer aud brandy.

Behaviour which would have been accepted as perfectly logical by physiologists in the secret of Mr. Redway's malady, was regarded by Mrs. Ramsay as characteristics of breeding—forms of eccentricity which are always present in blood that is very old, as though erraticism was a species of microbe that floated in the circulating system of the great and the illustrious in lineage. Nearly every person of noble blood, of whom she had heard, had been odd, and some of them extraordinary in conduct and manners. One could not sit still, and he was a royal prince. One quitted his noble guests seated round a board groaning with massy plate and viands beyond the dream of poets, to cut up bread into little cubes for the feeding of mice, which crept out of invisible crevices at the back of the mantelpiece. One loved Jews so well that he

became one. One used to put his fingers down his throat after a meal to make himself sick, that he might start afresh. In fact, Mrs. Ramsay held that the annals of the aristocracy were chiefly remarkable as illustrations of sudden, surprising, unexpected departures from the beaten conventional road along which Mrs. Grundy stalks with lifted skirt to save it from the dust. She could see nothing curious, nothing more than need excite a smile of gratification in her, in Mr. Redway's language or manners, in his stately interrogatories and swift dismissals of uncomfortable topics. Everything that he did, everything that he said that was unlike what the average man or woman would say or do, was in her sight, as I have said, a characteristic of Blood, an exhibition of qualities more persuasive of the verity of his statements than the most positive assurances of the Count, even had that distinguished foreigner taken his oath to them on bended knees.

The ship sailed south and the wind sometimes favoured her and sometimes headed her. Her pace at the best was slow. The boatswain told the carpenter that he did not expect to see his wife again under eighteen months; and the carpenter growled back, "What sinnifies h'eighteen months when, maybe, if you was to retarn at once you'd find her gone, and your savings, and your chairs and your beddin' along with her!" For saying which the boatswain had dummed his eyes, and for two days following his pipe had sounded with unusual shrillness.

Miss Shallott had confided to her maid her conviction that the ship would never reach Sydney; a statement which threw the maid into an hysterical attitude, which lingered until she was made to understand that Miss Shallott did not mean that the ship would sink in a storm or be cast away on a desolate island; but that, though the captain might try very hard, the ship would

never reach Sydney in length of days worth computing by passengers. Others did not go the length of this opinion, but made no doubt that the voyage would prove unprecedentedly lengthy; and Mr. St. Clair went so far as to conjecture that a further spell of detention might be anticipated, by Captain Buzacott being forced to touch at Table Bay or Simon's Town for fresh water and rations for the cuddy table.

But nobody ventured to mention those suppositions to the little skipper. Since the hour of his departure from Rio he had been as reticent as a British official who has nothing to report. In outward demeanour he still further dried up, until, morally speaking, he was rigid. If the milk of human kindness was fluent in him still, its casing was most unquestionably as hard as the shell of a cocoanut. He could turn nothing but a sour face on Mr. Jansen, whom, in his gizzard, he cursed; not merely because the Scandinavian had drawn up the address to the ambassador and obtained some signatures for it, but because it was owing to him that the ship had lost the services of an able seaman; for in those days captains did not love their men to run, though in these, one of the conditions of the lofty office of command, with many, is the obligation so to use sailors as to force them to desert, that they may leave their wages and their clothes behind them. Captain Buzacott did not know who had signed and did not inquire, but two at least he knew had rejected the invitation of Mr. Jansen—I mean Mrs. Ramsay and Mr. Beauclerk; and in consequence he put on a much more polite and amiable air to Mr. Beauclerk than had heretofore been noticeable in his relations with that gentleman. For example, he one day said to him—

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I observe that your cap has grown rather weather-worn, as things do when they are much used at sea. Even men, sir." He looked

peculiarly withered when he said this. "I have a new wide-awake which is entirely at your service, if you will do me the pleasure to accept it."

Mr. Redway bowed with gracious condescension. He declared himself overpowered; the commander was all goodness. The many kindnesses he had received at his hands would never be forgotten by himself nor by the lady who would remain Mrs. Ramsay until Sydney was reached. He hoped to give expression to his sense of obligation by something more endurable, something more tangible than words.

The captain's attitude was not lost upon Dr. Macpherson, in whose form dwelt the true spirit of the Scotchman, the quality of loyalty that creates the clan, the sense of dutifulness and fidelity that is, or should be, excited by congenial and professional comradeship. The doctor was on the articles as the captain was; he was a part of the ship, an item of the discipline of the ship, and properly frowned upon any attempt to lessen the master's authority, to question his judgment, or to cavil at his behaviour. He grew cool to Mr. Jansen as the expositor of others whose names as signatories were unknown to him as to the captain, and proportionally cordial in accost and general treatment of Mr. Beauclerk, whom he provided with a brand new black silk kerchief for his neck, besides daily inquiring after his health, with an occasional application of the stethoscope to the patient's breast. The Irresponsible who, in a darkling sort of way, felt rather ashamed of himself for having complied with Mr. Jansen's invitation to sign, and whose conscience was rendered inconveniently prickly during a gale of wind, in which he took note of the excellent seamanship of little Buzacott, and the wizardry of his influence and control over the noble, voiceless, thing he commanded and rendered sentient by the vital soul he quickened her with by his

orders; even this Irresponsible, who was a vulgar-minded man, capable of utterances which made the judicious grieve and the ladies look grave, began to exhibit a kindness for Mr. Beauclerk, as I may call him in this connection, and sent the steward to the shipwrecked gentleman's cabin with his compliments and apologies, and a pair of new navy-blue cloth trousers, which, as they happened to fit, were gracefully accepted and shortly afterwards worn; and the Irresponsible had the good taste to carefully avoid any reference with his eyes to Mr. Beauclerk's legs, when their owner approached him with outstretched hand and thanked him with all the dignity of the offshoot of a ducal house, a sort of animated gargoyle on the turretted height of some ancient castle, for his courteous consideration.

Slowly and patiently the good ship *Crimson Banner* made her way through the limitless brine, whose heaving breast her white canvas decorated with the beauty of the flower of the lily. With leaning masts she slanted through the South-east Trades and the voice of the Atlantic comber as it thunders upon the rocky coast of Agulhas was as an echo at her round bow as she broke the cliff-high sea, like trenches of flint snow-whitened into acres of boiling and seething foam. Onward yet through the mighty Southern Ocean, stopped thrice by the storm-fiend, who vexed her furiously; who thrashed her apparel of sail-cloth into rags which streamed in disheartening tatters from the fore and main topsail yards down upon their caps; who tautened her weather-shrouds and backstays till they yelled again in a hundred thousand devil's sonatas, played by raving-mad fiddlers whose orchestral seats filled the semicircle of the wild, wet, storm-blackened horizon—until one morning, one rippling morning of soft beeeze and fainting stars, when the slate of the dawn was swelling into faint rose, as though the atmosphere possessed a smoke-like tenuity which reflected the light of a crimson fire burning

low down behind the sea-line, a cry from the forecastle-head swept from the forecastle-break, to the break of the saloon deck—

"Land ho!"

And shortly afterwards the level beam of the half-risen sun, like the wand of a conjurer, evoked out of visionary distance the purple terrace of the shore, beyond whose front lay the goodly city of Sydney.

CHAPTER XX

SYDNEY

"THE confusion that ensued will not be wondered at when it is considered that every one stepped from the boat literally into a wood . . ."

Any man who has read the account of the founding of Sydney, in which occur the words I have quoted, will find himself repeating the passage as the cutwater of the vessel on whose deck he stands slides in betwixt the iron portals of the heads into a wide-breasted vision of luxurious beauty and noble expressions of man's handicraft in temple and in dwelling-house, in wharf and in ship. There should not be a space of waters upon the face of the globe more memorable to the Briton than this island-studded surface of Port Jackson, fringed with brine-sipping growths strange in tint with the leaden hues of the gum tree, more romantic than the most historic of the creeks and embowered passages of Spanish, Italian, or Greek story of deep-sea cut-throats and marine brigands of rolling gait; more romantic than this, I say, with its lovely inlets and murmuring bays and blue reaches of Lane Cove River and Paramatta River, and Iron Cove and Rozelle Bay.

For it is but a little more than a century ago that there sailed, first into Botany Bay and then into Port Jackson, His Britannic Majesty's frigate *Sirius*, of twenty guns, commanded by Commodore Arthur Phillip of the

Royal Navy. With this ship were the *Golden Grove*, the *Fishburn*, and the *Borrowdale* loaded with stores, and six transports freighted with convicts—in all, seven hundred and fifty-seven, of whom one hundred and ninety-two were women and eighteen children. The spot on which Governor Phillips' portable canvas house was pitched was, says the early chronicler, "at the head of the Cove, near a run of fresh water, which stole silently through a very thick wood." It was afterwards called Sydney Cove. It is now known as the Circular Quay. A little more than a hundred years ago—namely, January, 1788—and now that little run of fresh water "stealing silently" has been transformed by the magic of industry into a circle of stone magnificent in illustration with the giantesses of the deep which lie moored to it. And the tree, the historic tree under which Divine service was first held by the Reverend Richard Johnson has made way for cathedrals and churches and chapels. And the governor no longer looks at the settlement from the door of a small canvas pavilion, but commands from the windows of Government House (in the Tudor style) the glorious picture of Farm Cove and the streaming surface of the harbour down to South Head.

Do not you hold with the poet that "peace hath her victories not less renowned than war"? Nay, infinitely more renowned, I think; for the trophies of many bloody battles lie on the field hidden as skeletons, revealed as earth-disgorged skulls, or invisible as mould-encrusted cannon, eagles and broken drums; upon the ooze as ribs of wreck, flaunting green symbols of mortality in flickering lengths of weed, in the sand-hidden tomahawk, the boarding-pike, the corroded carronade. Then, in such a harbour, in such a city as the *Crimson Banner* has arrived at, behold the victory of peace, conquests of patient toil, symbols of

crime—all too severely punished—redeemed by wisdom purified by foresight, exalted into permanence by the spirit of a nation whose cry is the poet's, "Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine!"

More pertinent to this narrative than the thoughts induced in a contemplative man who visits Sydney for the first time is the effect upon the brains of Mr. Redway, of a town which in those days certainly was more English in edifice, disposition of street and general appearance, than any which I can point to in England. Rio had not appealed to him. There was, perhaps, nothing in Portuguese faces or façades to touch the chord of memory, to cleanse the mind of the perilous vapours which obscured it, which in some places revealed the distant, and in some eclipsed the near, rendering most things shapeless, though miserably persuasive to the distempered eye that dwelt upon them. But Sydney was to submit English houses, English faces, English women and children, and all needful agents of memory, to neutralize the influence of areas of unfamiliar vegetation to one accustomed to the gardens and meadows, and little woods and verdant swellings called hills, of our island home.

The ship in charge of a pilot floated slowly along Port Jackson, and was duly boarded by certain officials; and one who came aboard, who was not an official, was a dark-eyed, pale-faced young man with long hair, who spoke in a very low, earnest voice, and put questions to everybody who had time to stay to flap an answer at him. He was a reporter on the staff of a flourishing Sydney morning journal, and had speedily mastered the story of Mr. Beauclerk's shipwreck, which he carried ashore and took to his lodging, and there made one column of "copy" of it, rendering the narrative in the highest degree exciting to the eye by headlines which addressed themselves directly to the sensations; so that, next morning,

all Sydney and indeed the populations of a very large portion of New South Wales, knew the story of the rescue from a washstand, by a distinguished French nobleman, of Mr. Alexander Beauclerk, a first cousin of the Duke of St. Albans, and the owner of a magnificent and ancient family estate in Wiltshire; and it was added that during the voyage Mr. Beauclerk had fallen in love with Mrs. Ramsay, daughter of the late much-respected Thomas Double John Loveday, Esquire, of Tyburn Grange, Rose Bay, and that their marriage was shortly to be expected.

When Mrs. Mowbray read this at the hotel where she was stopping prior to her departure for her home seventy miles distant, she told a lady that she had seen Mrs. Ramsay talking in the saloon to a long-haired young man who looked like a newspaper correspondent, and that he made notes whilst she conversed with him: whence it may be inferred that the journalist obtained the information he published directly from Mrs. Ramsay, who certainly was an unimpeachable authority on the subject of Mr. Beauclerk's antecedents.

The farewells exchanged between Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay and their fellow-passengers were not very cordial. Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Latimer departed without a good-bye; Mr. Jansen received a scarcely appreciable nod. With two or three of the others our couple shook hands, but kindness and gratitude were visible only in Mrs. Ramsay's and Mr. Redway's leave-taking of Captain Buzacott and his officers.

"We shall hope, captain," said Mrs. Ramsay, "to be established at Rose Bay long before you sail for England, and it will give Mr. Beauclerk and myself great pleasure to see you and to keep you with us as long as your professional duties will permit."

Mr. Redway was most courteous and lordly in his thanks to the captain, who assured Mrs. Ramsay that, if

she would only be good enough to let him know the day on which they were going to be married, he would do himself the honour, in defiance of all business obligations, to be present.

"It will be strictly private," said Mrs. Ramsay, with a little colour. "It is Mr. Beauclerk's desire."

"Not too private for me to wish you joy, madam, in the vestry, I hope," said Captain Buzacott, whose face was a marine study in hard-weather smiles.

Nevertheless, if the little man was to be asked, nobody but he and the doctor was to be present. It was to be done early, darkly and mysteriously, and Mr. Beauclerk had so put the matter that Mrs. Ramsay easily saw, unless he was humoured, there would be a difficulty, to be followed by hideous mortification, and, morally speaking, a sort of aboriginal dance of triumph by Mrs. Mowbray, Mrs. Latimer, and others, whose relations with Mrs. Ramsay were about as cordial as those between the police and the poor.

It was late in the afternoon when Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay landed. They drove immediately to Petty's hotel, which is hard by St. Philip's Church—the rector or vicar of which, the Reverend Thomas Swann, was a friend of the lady—and not far from Charlotte Place. Mrs. Ramsay's first step was to send a messenger with a note to Mrs. Butterfield, at Tyburn Grange, acquainting that person with her arrival at Sydney, and requesting her attendance early next morning. Indeed the widow showed herself to be a thoroughly practical business-like woman, with a clear perception of urgent needs and a ready skill in providing for them. It was first of all perfectly plain that Mr. Beauclerk must lie *perdu* until the several tradesmen, who were in a position to supply his wants, had had time to render him presentable to the public eye. Another messenger was therefore entrusted

with notes of a somewhat peremptory nature signed by Mrs. Ramsay, whose credit was universally appreciated, requiring representatives of the best tailor, the best hosier, the best boot-maker, and others, to call for orders and instructions next morning. Mrs. Ramsay's baggage was abundant: Mr. Redway's might have been contained in a newspaper. It was impossible for him to show himself in the slops of the ship and in the eleemosynary gifts of the passengers.

But meanwhile, after dinner, the stricken and infatuated man—upon whose distempered functions the presence of Sydney, with such glimpses as he had obtained of its multitudinous interests, had produced not one jot healthier impressions than the visit to the ship *Skeleton*, or the sight of Rio, had occasioned—must at once write to Coutts' bank, enclosing a draft for one thousand pounds upon a balance which was as unsubstantial as his claims upon the dukedom of St. Albans. Mrs. Ramsay had said to him—

"Would it not be better, dear, to negotiate this through my bank? They will credit you with the amount on my responsibility, though really, as you know, you have no need for money, and can well afford"—she smiled delightfully as she spoke these words, and charmingly beamed in fondness upon him—"to wait until we return to England."

But Mr. Redway, as Mr. Beauclerk, must have his way. He was deeply grateful to his dearest, but he could not allow even the lady who was to be his wife to stand him, even temporarily, in lieu of the credit which he possessed, and which he was determined to enjoy. Money belonging to him was lying in Coutts' bank. The bank was also a holder of a very considerable sum in securities, many of them, indeed, colonial debentures. The ways of banking were tedious. Mrs. Ramsay's bank's method would certainly be one of procrastination compared to the

expedition he would achieve by communicating directly with Coutts' by the next ship which sailed with mails.

And so, after dinner, Mr. Redway sat down at a table illuminated by a powerful lamp, and after writing a letter, which he addressed to the "Manager of Coutts' Bank, Strand, London," he wrote a draft upon the same bank for one thousand pounds, which the poor man rendered legal by sticking a penny postage-stamp to it.

The letter and the improvised cheque were read by Mrs. Ramsay, who was perfectly satisfied, and who would have been perfectly satisfied even had she been visited by an emotion of doubt. The letter was well expressed, and the handwriting was firm, cultivated, and characteristic, whilst the draft was made out *secundum artem*. What was there in this to inspire mistrust in the lady? He had gone to work in the most matter-of-fact way. Had the chief accountant at Coutts' bank assured her that it was all right, she could not have felt more satisfied. She put a shilling stamp upon the envelope, and gave it to a waiter to be posted at once in time for the ship *Australia*, which was advertised to sail as the mail-boat for England and Europe three days later.

This letter was posted on March 12, 1861, five months and fifteen days from the date of the sailing of the *Crimson Banner* from the river Thames.

They were not to be visible that evening, even had Mr. Ramsay been dressed for the handsomest occasion. They would have been troubled, but the people of the hotel had received explicit orders. Three newspaper men called, and were decisively told that all the information they desired had been given to one of their clan, and that no more would be vouchsafed. Four several acquaintances of Mrs. Ramsay sought admission, but could not get beyond sending in their cards and going away. How could Mrs. Ramsay see anybody until Mr. Beauclerk was

in a state of clothes and mind fit for being introduced? So they spent the evening alone, and all the reports about them that reached the curious outside went by way of the waiter's tongue to the lady of the bar and the books, and thence onwards.

It was our September for them in respect of season. The window of the sitting-room was open, and the breeze came in laden with the flavour of the gum-tree, in which many find a subtle quality of aroma, and the almond incense of the acacia, bowed by its golden burden, the gift of autumn, and the sweetened atmosphere was humanized and civilised to the English ear by church clocks striking the hour, by the ringing of steeple bells, by the mingled tones of life, interpenetrated always by the sounding roll of the distant surf, like a noise of muffled drums.

You would think that the corridors of Mr. Redway's mind and memory would re-echo these voices of the evening, and lodge some seminal principle of sanity, however microscopic, in one or more of the cells of his brain. And yet it is a fact that never since the date of the washstand was he ever more a Beauclerk, ever more a close kinsman of the Duke of St. Albans, ever more lordly in self-complacency, his mind more richly coloured with the regal and splendid hallucinations of his imagination, than when he found himself installed by the loving and pre-nuptial goodness of Mrs. Ramsay in an elegantly furnished sitting-room, and in a charmingly equipped bedroom, in Petty's hotel.

Next day was to prove full of business for both of them. Very shortly after breakfast the tradesmen began to arrive, and the sitting-room was as festive as one of the dissipated plates in Hogarth's "Marriage *à la Mode*," with examples of silk hats, wideawakes, and other head-gear, boots and shoes, vari-coloured clothes—in bundles of

patterns, shirts, linen and flannel, underclothing, gloves, pocket-handerchiefs, scarves and ties for the neck. Mr. Redway, as Mr. Beauclerk, was very much at home in these proceedings. His dignified bearing, his lofty manner of choosing was, like the fraction of an inch which exalted the stature of Lilliput's monarch, enough to strike "an awe into all beholders." The memory of Redway worked in the conduct and deportment of Beauclerk. As Redway, and a childless man of independence, he had always selected the best tailors and hosiers in London, and was extremely choice in frock-coats, morning-coats, white waistcoats, and other "vests," and now as Mr. Beauclerk he shone in the art of selection. The tradesmen were greatly impressed by him. They had read the account of his family history and his disastrous shipwreck in the columns of the Sydney *Morning Herald*, and were prepared to meet a gentleman, but not so fine a gentleman, so Pelham-like in bearing, so distinguished in face, with his Charles I. growth of beard and mustache, as Mr. Beauclerk. Their mouths were full of him when they went away, and before the evening shades prevailed that day a considerable proportion of the population of Sydney were under the impression that Mrs. Ramsay, whose paternity, of course, was well known, was engaged to be married to a shipwrecked patrician, who had turned out to be no less than the heir to the dukedom of St. Albans.

Meanwhile Mrs. Ramsay, in her bedroom had her hands full. First of all, Mrs. Butterfield arrived. Mrs. Butterfield was remarkable for so Roman a nose, and such severity of profile, as would have served incomparably well for a Wardour Street coin but for her bonnet, which in no sense resembled a civic wreath. It might have been a fairly fashionable bonnet but for the effect produced by an extraordinary shrinkage, as though it had been cloven by the blow of a chopper,

and a flat piece secured to the back where the cut was, so that her bonnet fitted her as though moulded to her head in papier-maché. She was about sixty years of age, and spoke in the voice of a man. She had nursed Mrs. Ramsay when that lady was a baby; she had officiated at Mr. Loveday's departure from his colonial investments, his houses and his "runs"; she had entered upon an income of two hundred and fifty a year under his will, and owned the little house she lived in, and when Mrs. Ramsay was absent in Europe she occupied two rooms in Tyburn Grange when that furnished house was not let, and in a house-keeping sort of way looked after Mrs. Ramsay's charmingly situated seat.

When they met they fell into each other's arms, and a great deal of talk ensued. The essential topic was Mr. Beauclerk. Mrs. Butterfield was a little severe and reserved at first when she heard that Mrs. Ramsay was to marry the gentleman. It was not because she could imagine that there was anything in the smallest degree suspicious in Mr. Beauclerk's history. Mrs. Ramsay took very particular care that Mr. Beauclerk should be, in her representations and solemnly delivered statements, the full and royal-blooded Beauclerk the madman believed himself to be. The old nurse or housekeeper was a Roman Catholic and a virgin, though she was called Mrs., with an inborn, unreasoning, nun-like dislike of men, and she held views strong enough to be a source of alarm to widows on the subject of marriage as a sacrament.

"If he is disengaged I will introduce you," said Mrs. Ramsay. "You will please overlook his attire. You will view him as a shipwrecked man, and you will see how superior is native ability to clothes."

By this hour the tradesmen had left, and Mr. Redway was disengaged.

"Alexander," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, swimming into the room with Mrs. Butterfield close behind her, "this is my dear old nurse, Mrs. Butterfield, the housekeeper you have so often heard me talk about."

The austere woman of the Roman medallion sunk in a curtsey which, to the abstracted gaze, might have been the beginning of a swoon. Mr. Beauclerk's stately bow raised her to her natural height. He was still clad in his garb of the ship, but every prejudice of birth, even to the very low-seated understanding of Mrs. Butterfield, was backing him. He could not smile nor speak nor bow without diffusing to Mrs. Butterfield an awful sense of royalty. She could not mistake; she had seen more than one governor; she knew what a gentleman was, and was immediately convinced that nobody but a British nobleman could have borne himself so proudly, yet so kindly, with so much dignity tempered with so much graciousness, as Mr. Beauclerk.

"As much of Mr. Beauclerk's wardrobe as he immediately needs is promised for to-morrow," said Mrs. Ramsay, "and you will send the carriage to be here by eleven o'clock on Thursday morning. We will lunch at the Grange. I hope it is quite ready, Susannah?"

"It will be perfectly ready before you arrive," answered Mrs. Butterfield.

"I hope the horses have been well looked after, and are quite well."

"They look lovely," responded Mrs. Butterfield.

"You will adore my chesnut," said Mrs. Ramsay to Mr. Beauclerk. "I would not take three thousand guineas for her. I only hope she still keeps her magnificent form. What delightful canters we shall have, Alexander."

"I have ridden in steeplechases," said Mr. Redway, who had never even seen such a race, "and I believe I

shall make but little of your ditches, hedges, or even your rivers."

"I'll give you some jumps," said Mrs. Ramsay, with charming vivacity.

Mrs. Butterfield gazed at Mr. Beauclerk with Roman severity, untempered by intelligent scrutiny, for she saw nothing before her but a very fine gentleman indeed, who was not only going to come into a very good thing, but to be the possessor of what the rigid old creature regarded as, and generally swore to be, the very finest woman in all Australia.

"How is George?" inquired the finest woman in Australia.

"Nicely, thank you," answered Mrs. Butterfield. "He was a little discomposed last year by twins, which turned his attention to the diggings, but, knowing that you was returning, he said he would rather die than leave so bountiful a mistress, and as his livery has not been worn since you was here last—good lawkee! all four year this very last month—he wants nothing but a new box-hat, which I'll tell him to buy, and have in readiness by the day after to-morrow."

"Everything that is wanted, get," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"You need a new footman," said Mrs. Butterfield. "James died eighteen months ago."

"That's a need that will keep," answered Mrs. Ramsay, looking at Mr. Redway as though she would have him take part in this talk, and enjoy, in a pre-marital way, his present fascinating situation in life.

Mr. Redway continued to survey Mrs. Butterfield in silence, with a lordly expression of face which might signify a bland dignity towards the contrivance of which his striking resemblance to the Wotton portrait of King Charles I. must prove very serviceable.

After some further conversation, Mrs. Butterfield was

refreshed with wine and sandwiches, and took her departure; and her manner of striking an attitude with her Roman nose, on quitting the room after kissing Mrs. Ramsay in a nurse-like way and sinking into another swooning curtsey to Mr. Beauclerk, rendered her face so inscrutable that Mrs. Ramsay might have been defied to guess what was passing in the old lady's mind.

After lunch, Mrs. Ramsay wrote a long letter to the Reverend Thomas Swann, who was rector or vicar of St. Philip's. In this letter she related the story of Mr. Beauclerk's shipwreck and her engagement to that nobly-connected gentleman, and she concluded by asking the Reverend Thomas Swann and Mrs. Swann to give Mr. Beauclerk and herself the pleasure of their company to dinner at six o'clock next evening. This invitation was sent by hand, as Mr. Swann did not live far from his church, and within two hours Mrs. Ramsay received a reply in which Mr. Swann and his wife accepted the invitation. The reverend gentleman ventured to send nothing more than his blessing, as happily they would be meeting soon, and he would then be able to give her all the news and to offer his humble felicitations to Mrs. Ramsay and her noble *fiancé*. He would leave Mrs. Swann to speak for herself.

Several acquaintances of Mrs. Ramsay called during the day, and a large number of parcels arrived addressed to Alexander Beauclerk, Esq., and could this unfortunate man have received Mrs. Ramsay's friends in his underclothing only, together with boots, collars, a silk hat, or a wideawake, he might easily have equipped himself for the occasion. But the tailor's output must be awaited; and so Mrs. Ramsay excused herself by saying she was fatigued after her very long voyage—as though she had come in a post-chaise or a mail-coach from London,

but would take care to let her friends know when she was at home.

Next morning, before noon, Mr. Redway looked exceedingly dignified and gentlemanly in a new suit of clothes, which fitted him admirably. His polished boots were decorated with spats. He wore a handsome gold chain, the gift of Mrs. Ramsay; this chain, and the fine gold repeater at the end of it, had belonged to the late Mr. Ramsay. His regal face was supported by shirt-collars such as you may see in portraits of Lord Palmerston and other worthies of that period, and his carefully scissors-trimmed beard did not conceal from the critical eye the sparkle of a diamond breast-pin (another gift of Mrs. Ramsay) on a ruby necktie. He looked as well as a man can look who is fed well, is in the enjoyment of a quality of profound self-complacency, whose mind is a blank as respects its moral and commercial obligations, and is not too mad to value the possession of a fine woman, though too mad to understand that his association with her, beyond the power of ignorance to legalize, must, under the circumstances, be in the last degree immoral.

His new clothes appeared to put new heart into him. He was more tender in his bearing and address to Mrs. Ramsay; he had ceased to feel that his dignity was perpetually hazarded by his apparel of slops and lendings. An element of graciousness which rendered him quite kingly in Mrs. Ramsay's eyes was visible in his smile, his language, his general demeanour, even though he addressed a waiter. It was no revolution in his nature; the poor devil was simply topping the part which he had involuntarily and unconsciously rehearsed in the washstand.

They kept close that afternoon, though the day was beautiful, and Mrs. Ramsay secretly languished for a drive; but she did not want to be seen in public with

him until after their marriage, an affair which her invitation to the Reverend Thomas Swann was to expedite. It was natural she should not desire that more gossip than could be helped should be set afoot, lest something she must passionately wish should be left unsaid reached the ears of her betrothed. She knew that Mrs. Latimer and Mrs. Mowbray were leagues distant from Sydney, but other acquaintances of hers flourished in the city or dwelt in the suburbs, and she was determined to oppose to their kindly communications the impassable barrier of the marriage-altar.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Swann arrived at half-past six o'clock, and were received in a small drawing-room in the hotel. The clergyman was a short, pale, bald-faced man, with large weak eyes whose characterless gaze was not helped by spectacles; physically he was remarkable for nothing but rheumatism in the hands, which had shaped most of his fingers into the appearance of pocket-telescopes with their one tube drawn out. Mrs. Swann, on the other hand, rose six foot one in her stockings, and was undoubtedly in command not only of her priest, but of his church and the whole of his parish. The greeting betwixt them and Mrs. Ramsay was unaffectedly cordial, and they saluted Mr. Beauclerk (whose bow was as considerable as, but much more condescending than, Dr. Johnson's bow to an archbishop) with well-bred reserve and the respect which the polite consider due to quality.

Mrs. Ramsay held a paternal title to the esteem and kindness of the Reverend Thomas Swann. Her father, Mr. Loveday, had in his time been a liberal patron of St. Philip's. The sympathy of this extraordinary convict with things holy had found expression in the gift of an organ. The offertory regularly received from him an annual cheque for one hundred guineas. He had bequeathed a

large sum to be distributed in the shape of interest—the Australian people were then paying six per cent. for loans—amongst the deserving poor of the parish of St. Philips. Mrs. Ramsay had also been very charitable and good, and it is not therefore difficult to understand why Mr. and Mrs. Swann were extremely pleased to see her, and to show a most marked deference and courtesy, accompanied by a well-bred neglect of anything approaching critical inquiry, in their opening conversation with Mr. Beauclerk.

Mrs. Ramsay was handsomely dressed in white silk. She sparkled with jewels. She had naturally, and perhaps necessarily, ceased to betray in her apparel the lightest indication of a bereaved and mourning heart. Her train, as Mr. Swann conducted her to the sitting-room in which they dined, threatened the stately gait of Mr. Beauclerk who followed, with Mrs. Swann of Patagonian altitude towering on his arm. They began with oysters, to whet an appetite which, so far as the Swanns were concerned, needed no provocation. The soup, the fish, the whole dinner, in short, was the very best which Petty's could supply, and in those days, and possibly in these, Petty's enjoyed no mean reputation for the dinners it could serve to order.

"Is this your first visit to the colony?" inquired Mr. Swann, who ate and drank with great enjoyment.

"The first," answered Mr. Redway.

"I think," said Mr. Swann, addressing Mrs. Ramsay, "that Mr. Beauclerk will be impressed by Sydney as perhaps the grandest example in the world of not only the progress, but the spirit of British colonization and civilization.

"Mr. Beauclerk cannot fail to be struck by our churches," said Mrs. Swann.

"When I come to think," continued the reverend gentleman, "that it is only seventy-three years ago since

that noble fellow, Captain Arthur Phillips, founded this colony, I, though habituated to the steady growth of this great city, am lost, I am bound to confess, in admiration and astonishment."

"It is strange," said Mrs. Swann, "a coincidence, in fact, that our church should be named St. Philip's."

"After Governor Phillip?" asked Mr. Redway, foolishly, directing one of his superior looks over Mrs. Swann's cap, which had been concealed by a light shawl in a walk to the hotel.

Mrs. Swann directed a somewhat severe gaze at her plate. Mr. Swann, whose countenance had grown moist and a little wine-coloured, said affably—

"No, sir. Captain Phillip was a very good man, but he was not a saint. Mrs. Ramsay, I will tell you something that would have greatly interested your dear father."

She glanced uneasily at him, and then at the wine-glasses beside his plate, and with a swift roll of her fine eyes saw, by the contraction of Mr. Redway's brow, that he was knitting his understanding into a condition of receptivity.

"When," continued Mr. Swann, "I was in England seven years ago, I heard that Governor Phillip had died Admiral of the Blue at Bath, and that he was buried in a little church where he and his wife had worshipped: a little church called St. Nicolas, situated close to the river Avon, in the village of Bathampton. I visited that church—you'll remember the delightful drive, Maria?"—said the reverend gentleman, feeling in his breast-pocket and producing a letter-case, "but was unfortunate enough to find the rector away, and the gentleman who was taking his duty was from home. The clerk took us into the church, and rolling up a strip of matting along the entrance path, displayed a flat pavement-like stone worn

and begrimed by time and the tread of rural worshippers. The letters on this stone were scarcely decipherable by the dim light in this church which, I was informed, dates back to the eleventh century—making St. Philip's seem uncommonly young," added Mr. Swann, with a rosy smile. "But the clerk and I between us made out this inscription."

He produced from the pocket-case a long slip cut from a newspaper. It was his own contribution to the journal. He was in the habit of carrying it about for ready production at dinner-tables, or on other social occasions where visitors or new arrivals in the colony were present. He read aloud as follows:

"Underneath lie the remains of
ARTHUR PHILIP, Esq.,
Admiral of the Blue.
Who died August 31st, 1814, in his 76th year.
Also of ISABELLA,
Relict of the above
ADMIRAL PHILIP.
Who died March 1st, (?) 1823, in the 71st year of her age."

"How very interesting," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, looking at Mr. Redway, who was listening in lordly silence, and with that expression of gravity which Mrs. Ramsay was never weary of admiring in him as a characteristic of blood.

"When we had read this inscription," continued Mr. Swann, "the clerk fetched a pair of steps and invited me to ascend to the top of them into the tower, against the wall of which, in twilight, practically out of sight from the floor of the church, is a mural tablet, the surmounting symbolism of which on a small pediment I managed to make out as an urn sculptured in relief, an anchor and rope, a cannon, a pile of round shot, and a sponge-rod, the whole covered with dust. Beneath was chiselled:

"Near this tablet are the remains of Arthur Philip, Esq., Admiral of the Blue, First Governor and Founder of the Colony of New South Wales, who died August 31st, 1814, in the 76th year of his age."

The reverend gentleman replaced the slip and pocketed the case.

"How deeply interesting!" exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, with a sigh of relief.

It was plain that the late Mr. Double-John Loveday was not to prove interesting in any other sense than the interest it was to be assumed he would have taken in the burial-place of the first man who landed convicts in New South Wales.

"I returned," Mr. Swann went on, "to the stone under which the ashes of the founder of this colony lie, and gazing down upon the almost indecipherable lettering beheld, as it were, a vision. I witnessed his Britannic Majesty's ship *Sirius* in full sail entering this noble and majestic harbour, not yet named. With her I beheld the store-ships and the convict-ships laden with the lamentable harvest of sin. The gallant commander of the *Sirius* trod the snow-white deck; he was clad in the cocked hat, the long waistcoat, the knee-breeches, stockings, and buckled shoes of that period; and I seemed to see the glow of rapture in his eye as he cast it round the splendid, spacious, and verdant scene of which he was to take possession in the name of our glorious country. And then, Mrs. Ramsay, and then, Mr. Beauclerk, and then, Maria, as *you* know, to realize as I did the extinction of that stirring picture and its ghastly lapse into a handful of infragrant dust, cribbed, cabined, and coffined beneath my feet as I stood—oh! never was my heart more deeply affected by the shock and chill of death, by the awful mystery of that mighty change, than then!"

The reverend gentleman bowed his head, manifestly

affected. Mrs. Swann looked deeply appreciative, but modestly kept her eyes downwards bent. Mrs. Ramsay was thoughtful, and remained silent. Mr. Redway drank a little wine, and said—

"Do they think much of this Governor Phillip here?"

"His memory, of course, is held in high esteem as the founder of this colony," Mr. Swann answered.

"And there is no further token of that esteem to be found," said Mrs. Ramsay, "outside of a mural tablet hidden up in the tower of a little bit of a church thousands of miles away from where the governor made his reputation."

"They should erect a statue to him in that church," said Mrs. Swann, "something very tall and striking in marble, set up in a part where it would be a conspicuous object. It would court pilgrims from all parts of the English-speaking world."

"Who's going to bear the expense of such a memorial?" inquired Mr. Redway.

"An appeal must be made—a subscription invited," answered Mrs. Ramsay. "I should like you to be identified with such a movement."

"Are they proud here of their origin?" inquired Mr. Redway.

"I beg pardon," retorted Mr. Swan, looking embarrassed.

"Do the inhabitants of Sydney, of New South Wales in general, desire to see the story of their origin perpetuated by a marble statue erected to the first convict importer?" said Mr. Redway, with the taste of a lunatic, and, no doubt, the look of one, if there had been eyes at that table equal to the interpretation of his face.

"My dear Alexander," exclaimed Mrs. Ramsay, admirably counterfeiting an expression of cheerfulness and reassurance in the glance she directed first at Mr. and

then at Mrs. Swann, "when I told you my father was a convict"—the glass of wine which Mr. Swann was lifting to his lips was arrested midway, as though the reverend gentleman's arm had been blasted—"what was your answer? Weren't you gloriously magnanimous? Didn't you say that Daniel O'Connell would have been transported if the Government of his time could have had its way? And do you suppose that the population of New South Wales springs wholly from a convict establishment? Ha, ha, ha! Oh, Mrs. Swann! what extravagantly absurd ideas and prejudices strangers bring with them here."

"I do assure you, Mr. Beauclerk," exclaimed Mr. Swann, with a fervour which he accentuated by waving his wine-glass, heedless of the risks of spilling its contents, "that scores of men as nobly connected as yourself have settled in this colony, and may be regarded as the founders of lines whose ancestry will one day furnish New South Wales with an aristocracy as illustrious as Great Britain."

"I don't doubt it," responded Mr. Redway, in his most dignified and courteous way, but, of course, with an irrelevancy which could not have missed fire as an appeal to critical insight had any of the three listeners been visited by the slightest suspicion of the truth.

"Have you seen Tyburn Grange, Mr. Beauclerk?" asked Mrs. Swann, artfully, but with some austerity in her face, changing the subject.

"No, madam."

"We are going to drive there to-morrow," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"Why Tyburn Grange?" inquired Mr. Redway, as though struck by an idea.

"You may well ask, Alexander," responded Mrs. Ramsay, quickly wondering at the same time why he had not put this question before, as she had frequently named the house to him. "My father was a man capable of

deep resentment. He deeply resented his deportation, or rather the outrageously small occasion for it." She glanced at Mr. Swann with a pleading look of an instant in her fine eyes. "He was determined to perpetuate, in a bitter, ironical manner, the tradition of his life, of which he was not ashamed, and to prove his contempt of public opinion he entitled his house after a place in London where they hanged men."

"He was a man of extraordinary spirit," said Mr. Swann. "The very name of his house is a permanent vindication of him, and you do well, Mrs. Ramsay, by preserving his choice to show that you are in sympathy with his views."

"Grange!" murmured Mr. Redway, with an expression as though his mind were at a distance. "Is it a farm?"

"Oh dear, no," laughed Mrs. Ramsay.

"My friend, Lord Polethorpe," said Mr. Redway, "lives in a grange. It is moated. I rather fancy that Tennyson had that grange in his eye when he wrote some moaning verses about one 'Mariana.'"

The conversation drifted into small talk. After dinner Mrs. Ramsay led the way into the room in which she had received her guests, and when tea and coffee had been served, nothing much was said about anything for some time but the approaching marriage between Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay, and a programme, to which Mr. Redway contributed an idea, was arranged.

As they walked home Mr. Swann asked his wife what she thought of Mrs. Ramsay's choice.

"It will be a marriage of ambition, not of love," said Mrs. Swann.

"I think she does well, seeing that she lacks nothing else in the way of earthly blessings, in determining to improve her social position," observed Mr. Swann, who

was mellow with good cheer. "He is very dignified, and what you call a gentleman of the old school."

"Why, yes," answered Mrs. Swann, who held her dress so high that she seemed in the lamp-light to be walking on wooden legs. "There can be no question about his breeding. But I will not say the same about his good taste. Some of his remarks struck me as very odd, and he is occasionally so abrupt as to be almost offensive."

"I have seen a portrait of Charles I.," said Mr. Swann, "and Mr. Beauclerk's face is extraordinarily like it."

"Would a man of lofty position be constantly dragging into a general conversation the names of the aristocracy?" inquired Mrs. Swann.

"Why," answered her husband, who was in a very good humour, "men like Beauclerk scarcely know any other person but lords to talk about."

"The thing will be called romantic by some and impudent by others," said Mrs. Swann.

"By the envious," said Mr. Swann. "I don't know a woman in the colony who would not be glad of the chance for herself or her daughter."

"But he was picked up out of the sea," said Mrs. Swann, "and his story is his own."

"Oh dear no, not quite," responded Mr. Swann. "The French count who rescued him was an old friend. He knew all about him. Besides, Mrs. Ramsay has had plenty of opportunity of discovering the truth for herself."

A few more sentences after this description carried them home.

Next day a carriage and pair drove up to the door of Petty's Hotel. The horses were blood bays, resplendent with plated harness; the carriage was a barouche, and on the box were a coachman and page, in livery and laced

hats. The page had been improvised by Mrs. Butterfield, who could not immediately find a man to replace the dead footman. She wished that her mistress should be driven to her home in such full-blown dignity as could be contrived in a hurry, and a boy therefore, who fitted a page's suit in Mrs. Butterfield's keeping, was buttoned up in it with so much result of general tightness, however, that when he dismounted to ring the bell he breathed as if half suffocated by over-eating.

Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay entered, and the drive to Rose Bay began. The couple were much observed until they had been driven clear of the populous thoroughfares. The public attention was not attracted so much by the fine turn out—Sydney was always remarkable for its handsome equipages; it was the pair in the carriage who caught the public eye, often arresting the spectator into a halt, and compelling his head into a following gaze. Never did Mrs. Ramsay look more attractive. Never did any charmingly apparelled lady sit by the side of a more dignified and noble-looking gentleman. The very horses seemed conscious of the unusual freight of blood they were drawing, and stepped out in the highest pride of grace and pace. It was rather too early, perhaps, for the people who knew Mrs. Ramsay to be abroad, and she bowed once only, and then to two ladies, who, after they had saluted her, fell into an inimitable posture of astonishment and curiosity, remaining rooted long after the carriage had swept out of sight. Once clear of the city the drive was delightful. The sky was clear, the sun shone brightly, the breeze was soft and sweet, and Nature spread a banquet for the eye in natural growths, which might have been selected by the skilful hand that planned the Botanic Gardens; and even the leaden-hued gum tree, that very ghost of trees, as it has been called, failed to depress the joyous sense of life inspired by

splendour of colouring, by luxuriance of growth, and by the grace of motion wrought by the viewless finger of the wind.

Arrived at a fine gateway, the carriage rolled along a curved drive, and the home of Mrs. Ramsay stood before the couple in massive bulk of stately architecture. The widow's eyes were upon Mr. Redway's face as he gazed. The building was in the Corinthian order throughout. The central figure consisted of a pediment supported by four Corinthian columns, raised on a pedestal with panelled dies. A flight of steps, flanked by balustrades, ornamented with couchant lions, led to the front entrance. The lower part of the house was rusticated, and pierced with semicircular windows. Pilasters ran up the entire face of the building, and divided it into equal bays, and coupled pilasters terminated the angles. Round the first-floor windows were moulded architraves stopped on sills supported by consoles. The house was crowned by a handsome entablature, with deep over-hanging cornice, modillions, and dentil corse, and the building was completed by a balustraded parapet surmounted by sculptured figures.

"Is it as handsome as York Manor?" she asked, with modesty and coyness in her face.

"It wants the age and the traditions of our English home; but it is very fine, very fine indeed," he answered, with lofty urbanity, whilst his eyes travelled over the façade.

This house had been built by Mr. Loveday. He had said to the architect—

"Look 'ere, governor: I've got the money, and you've got the brains; I want something that'ull make 'em talk, and's going to last, not only my time, but my daughter's after me; and not only my daughter's time, but's going to last their children's children's time, and stand as a sight

and an ornament which will bring people to see it, and so, governor, you can fire away as soon as ever you please."

And the architect had fired away to the tune of forty-six thousand pounds. For that was the cost of the building alone, and in spite of the architect's remonstrances, Mr. Double-John Loveday insisted upon calling this seat or residence Tyburn Grange, declaring that Grange sounded better than any other word he could think of, and that he gave 'em Tyburn as a promise that he, for one wasn't ashamed of the origin of New South Wales.

How many acres went to the land about this house I do not know. The scene was a swelling surface of gently sloping hills and softly sinking valleys cultivated into spaces of flower garden and lawn richly wooded in many parts with the growths of New Holland; but the axe of the artist in landscapes had contrived that the natural woods of the soil should not veil the glorious breast of the ocean sweeping in silver-fringed brightness into Rose Bay, from the windows of the mansion; and when, in the few moments' pause at the door, Mrs. Ramsay called Mr. Beauclerk's attention to the sweet surface of blue sea, an ejaculation of pleasure left his lips in his really sane enjoyment of the familiar spectacle of ocean, beautiful just there with its flicker of white canvas, like the hovering darts of the sea-gulls' wings coming and going, or the fitful wink of the breaking wave in snow-crest.

The tight little page pulled a handsome brass bell-chain, and almost immediately the great hall door was flung wide open, and the figure of Mrs. Butterfield, stately with Roman nose and her Sunday black-silk gown, was to be seen swooning in curtseys upon the threshold. Mrs. Ramsay alighted, Mr. Redway followed.

"Here we are, Susannah," exclaimed the widow, with such colouring of the vivacity of the heart in her cheek

as sharpened into diamond brilliance the gay light in her soft dark eyes, and seemed to brighten as with gold dust the rich bronze of her abundant hair.

"We shall be ready for lunch when I have shown Mr. Beauclerk over the house."

Mr. Redway bowed loftily to one of Mrs. Butterfield's remarkable curtseys.

"How," inquired Mrs. Ramsay, "have you managed as regards helps?"

"I've got together what's needed to cook and make ready by the time you are," answered Mrs. Butterfield. "But servants are still the pest of the place, and the wages they're asking are awful. The best is as bad as bad can be, and I quite dread the idea of a new butler and footman. Getting gardeners is as easy as shelling peas; it's the indoor servant, sir," addressing Mr. Redway, "that's the trouble out here."

"I know it is—I know it is," answered Mr. Redway, lifting his hand, whilst he gazed round the spacious hall, illuminated like a church by stained windows and decorated with several trophies of the forest and the field. "It's the same thing at home, and the scullery wench is as impossible as the *chef de cusine*, with exorbitant demands and rascally expectations, seeing the homes they come from, where a joint of meat is unknown and where they are glad to sleep three in a bed."

As this judgment was in correspondence with Mrs. Butterfield's opinions, she sank in another profound curtsey, and the Roman austerity of her countenance visibly relaxed.

But Mr. Beauclerk was now to be shown over the house, and Mrs. Ramsay led the way, and Mrs. Butterfield followed, rustling. It will be presumed of such a house as this that the rooms are sumptuously furnished. This was so, and my simple assurance must take the place of

description. The shelves of the library were handsomely loaded. Ranges of conservatory glowed with splendid examples of Australian growths. In the dining-room, that was as big as an ordinary ballroom, Mr. Redway stopped to look at the pictures. One of these pictures represented Mr. Loveday, a rough, stern face with heavy jaws resting in collars and a white cravat; bulging brows, with the front hair combed down over them like a woman's fringe; then Mrs. Loveday, a comely woman of about five and forty, with eyes which reminded you of her daughter's; then an idealized portrait of Miss Helen Loveday (Mrs. Ramsay) aged twenty, a very sweet and glowing face which smiled at you with provoking archness, more delightful yet perhaps by virtue of its rural old home dress with its high-waisted girdle, the modest kerchief dissembling but scarcely disguising the ripening beauties of the breasts.

"And that is how I am supposed to have looked when I was a little younger than I am now," said Mrs. Ramsay.

"And there never was a better likeness took," exclaimed Mrs. Butterfield.

"My sister's picture went to her husband," said Mrs. Ramsay. "These are the family pictures, Alexander. These are our historic traditions."

She slightly dropped her head, softly smiling.

"There are plenty at York Manor to supply deficiencies," said Mr. Redway. "We will carry you home when we return. It is very charming. It might pass as a duplicate of Lady Amelia Appleton's portrait—the most fascinating of women—Count D'Orsay was amongst her most passionate admirers. To her is ascribed that significant bon-mot: A French refugee of noble birth got into a talk on metaphysics with her, and quoting Voltaire's saying '*Pourqui sommes nous*!' he added, 'Why

is man here?' 'For woman,' answered Lady Amelia. Did you ever hear anything smarter or more to the point, Nelly?"

And he began to laugh as he strolled on, looking at other paintings by or after masters more or less celebrated. Mrs. Ramsay exchanged looks with Mrs. Butterfield, who tried by her eye to imply the conviction of her heart, that Mr. Beauclerk was a man of unquestionably noble birth.

It is noteworthy that neither whilst inspecting the house, nor whilst at lunch nor subsequently down to the day of his marriage, nor after, did Mr. Redway make any reference to the late Mr. Ramsay, nor seem to be even conscious that a predecessor had claimed the widow's affection. Nor by the smallest hint did the lady help Mr. Redway to think of Mr. Ramsay; the truth being that the mourning-band is worn outside the hat; for if it were the fashion to wear it inside, the hat would seldom be found lined. The momentary idea which, in the consciousness, forms the link between one chain of associations and another, was in Mr. Redway's case either not remembered or, which amounts to the same thing, totally obliterated. Which proposition, as a possibility entirely reasonable as a diagnosis in mental conditions is, strange to relate, shared both by Sir William Hamilton and Mr. John Stuart Mill, the latter observing—

"If we admit (what physiology is rendering more and more probable) that our mental feelings, as well as our sensations, have for their physical antecedents particular states of the nerves; it may well be believed that the apparently suppressed links in a chain of association really are so; that they are not, even momentarily, felt; the chain of causation being continued only physically by one organic state of the nerves succeeding another so rapidly that the state of mental consciousness appropriate to each other is not produced."

A few days more than three weeks after the arrival of the *Crimson Banner* at Sydney, a morning paper, published in that city, printed the following effusion from the pen of one of its contributors, who was probably, to use the language of the press, "inspired"—

"MARRIAGE OF ALEXANDER BEAUCLERK, ESQ., TO MRS. JERNINGHAM RAMSAY.—On Saturday morning last the marriage of Alexander Beauclerk, Esq., to Helen, relict of the late Jerningham Ramsay, Esq., of Stafford House, Bathurst, was solemnized at the church of St. Philip's. The wedding was strictly private. Amongst the few assembled were Captain Aaron Buzacott of that well-known Australian liner the *Crimson Banner* and Doctor Macpherson the surgeon of that ship. The officiating clergyman was the Reverend Thomas Swann. The bride, who was in high spirits and looked most lovely in her travelling-dress, was given away by Captain Buzacott. It may be mentioned here that Mr. Alexander Beauclerk is closely connected with the Duke of St. Albans, whose House, as we know, dates through Charles II. and Eleanor Gwynne to the long, splendid, and romantic line of the Stuarts. Mr. Beauclerk bears an extraordinary resemblance to some of the portraits of King Charles I., insomuch that his face alone would supply indisputable testimony to the presence of the Blood Royal of Great Britain in his veins. After an elegant and *recherché* breakfast, served at Petty's Hotel, with the usual culinary excellence of that well-known establishment, the happy couple, amidst the sincere congratulations of the few friends in attendance, proceeded at once to Bathurst to spend their honeymoon."

CHAPTER XXI

THE LIFE-BELT'S MESSAGE

"'ORRIBLE founderin' of a mile styme ship. 'Orful loss of life! Shock-in' pertikeelars! Latest accounts!"

These and the like sentences were one October morning howled out in the choice Cockney accents of the London street-boy by a newspaper lad on the pavement in front of the row of houses of which one was occupied by Mrs. Redway. The time was a quarter-past eight in the morning. The cook in Mrs. Redway's kitchen was putting a chop she had just fried for the lap-dog in the mincing-machine, and the housemaid was waiting to take up the hot water and the lap-dog's breakfast to Mrs. Redway's bedroom. The scullery-maid, whose brother was at sea, rushed up the area steps to buy a paper of the boy who smelt the incense of the chop through the open kitchen door and felt in consequence more starved than usual. Unluckily for him, he was not a lap-dog; he was merely a London street-boy, in broken boots and his father's shirt, and a man's coat from which the tails had been shredded, and a greasy old cap that covered a head of hair which had not known soap from the hour its owner came weeping into being.

A bedroom bell was violently rung.

"She 'ears 'im a-singin' out," exclaimed the housemaid, as the boy fell to yelling afresh.

"Why, if it ain't the ship that master sailed in!"

cried the scullery-maid, glaring at the paper which she had held at arm's length as though she fended off an approaching ghost. "Wasn't 'er name *Princess Royal?*"

"What's 'appened to 'er?" inquired the housemaid, turning pale.

The scullery-maid began to read: "Loss of a Cape Mail liner. Over one hundred souls supposed drowned. Thrilling narratives by the survivors——"

The bedroom bell again rang. Whilst the cook dumped the contents of the mincing-machine into a saucer and the housemaid filled a can with hot water from the boiler, the scullery-maid read with a voice shrill with excitement—

"That well-known Royal Mail steamer the *Princess Royal*, foundered on the night of October 3rd, in the neighbourhood of Cape Finisterre by striking——"

"'Ere, don't read more 'till I come back," said the housemaid; and she went out with the saucer in one hand and the hot-water can in the other.

Mrs. Redway was standing before the toilet-glass, in her dressing-jacket, doing her hair, when the housemaid entered. The dog, impatient at the delay of serving its breakfast, was barking with the bronchial yap-yap of the spoilt and senile beast of the lap. The voice of the newsboy could be heard far down on the pavement some distance away.

"What are they calling out?" said Mrs. Redway.

The housemaid, who had been in Mr. and Mrs. Redway's service four years, was sincerely affected, and looked the sensations which were in conflict within her. She was a pretty girl, now very pale, with large round black eyes, and she stood incapable of speech, staring at her mistress. The lap-dog was barking furiously at the saucer. Mrs. Redway caught sight of the girl's face in

the looking-glass and turned her head, and the hand that grasped the brush at her hair fell to her side.

"What is the matter with you?" she inquired.

"I'm afraid, ma'am," answered the housemaid, "that the steam-vessel that master sailed in 'as gone down."

Mrs. Redway gazed at her for a moment or two in silence, and, without visible change of colour, the skin of her face seemed to tighten over the high cheek-bones and to thin her compressed lips into a mere line of mouth.

"Who's told you this?" she exclaimed.

"It's in the paper, ma'am."

"Go and bring me one, instantly."

The housemaid put down the can and saucer, and ran out of the room. She returned in a minute with the paper.

"That will do," said Mrs. Redway, and seating herself in an easy-chair, she began to read.

The news, stripped of much excellent description—another illustration of the sad waste of literary talent in journalism—amounted to this:—The steamship *Avonia*, bound from a Spanish port to London, had yesterday put into Falmouth and landed seventeen people, whom she had rescued from an open boat. Nine of these persons, male and female, were passengers; the remainder, sailors and firemen. The story related by them was that their ship was the *Princess Royal*, one of the steamers of the Company which conveys the mails between England and Cape Colony. This ship, on a foggy night, had struck upon a rock, and her destruction was so swift that time was barely allowed for the lowering of the boats. It was believed that four boats loaded with the people got away. But, even if the other three boats should, happily, later on be accounted for, considerable loss of life was still to be feared. The names of the rescued persons were given, but that of Alexander Beauclerk Redway was not in the

list. Several passengers and two or three of the sailors related their experiences, more or less thrilling. The passengers had escaped in their bed-clothes. Much loss of life, it was to be believed by the narrators, must have been occasioned by explosions in the engine-room, and the bursting of the decks when the steamer foundered. It was certainly known that four boats full of people had left the ship, and hope was expressed that news of the safety of all who had been fortunate enough to get away from the vessel would, before long, be received.

Mrs. Redway read this report from the beginning to the end. The skin of her face was so tense as to render it expressionless. There could be no play of visible emotion in that drum-taut surface. Shocked and dismayed, of course, she was; but she had been born a passionless person, and self-control, therefore, was to her no very difficult obligation. She was a wife, and, in her way, had loved her husband; and his corpse, for all she knew, might be washing about somewhere, whilst she sat in that chair with the newspaper on her knee, trying to realize this abrupt, this prodigious, this life-changing confrontment.

Perhaps she had not studied her books in vain. She had been in her time, and still was, a student of Mill, Bentham, Bradlaugh, George Eliot, the contributors to the *Spectator* and the *Leader*, and other profound thinkers. She had established a lost dogs' home. She was a Radical in politics, with strong opinions based on fallacies, and had frequented political meetings of a rowdy character at Hammersmith and adjacent parishes, where she accepted the risk of having her hat battered and her gown torn. Those eloquent high cheek-bones, those large, cold eyes, that small supply of hair, wrenched from her thoughtful brow into a careless top-knot, could not deliver in vain, save to undiscriminating eyes, the

message of her mind. Even as she sat, she had no shadow of a doubt that she was a widow. But she was superior in fortitude, a quality often yoked to the passionless character; her thin lips grew thinner by compression; they were incapable of the scream which must have escaped the mouth of a type of woman of a weaker moral structure. She did not for a moment dream of pulling the bell to summon sympathy, even in the shape of a housemaid. Her highest aim had ever been to be practical in all things, to realize on the instant, to act coolly in crises. She had so disciplined herself in this respect, indeed, that she never went to bed without being prepared to smell smoke or to be disturbed by the cry of fire, when, as she believed, she would at once know what to do.

She knew what to do now, and started at once, without agitation of heart or of hand, to dress herself. She went down stairs, and breakfast was served. Fortunately, perhaps, for her, she had no bosom friend, no dear relation, to communicate with in this fearful trial. The parlour-maid, who waited upon her at breakfast, glanced at her askant, astonished and, perhaps, disgusted by her composure; and she told them in the kitchen that missus wasn't taking on at all, she didn't show no excitement, on the contrary, she was eating quite as 'earty as usual, and had spoke to her dog once or twice as natural and collected as though the master was sitting opposite.

Then came the order for the victoria to be at the door by a quarter to eleven punctually, at which hour Mrs. Redway, veiled, entered her carriage, and was driven through the gloom of a London October morning to the offices of the Union Steamship Company. There they could give her no further news. The other boats were sure to be fallen in with; telegrams had been sent to ports from which home-bound steamers were proceeding, and their masters had been requested to keep a sharp

look-out. The boats could not possibly be far removed from the direct track of ships bound to certain ports. The statements of some of the men who had come up from Falmouth represented the weather, when the ship struck, as quiet, and the boats, therefore, went in no jeopardy through perilous winds and high seas. Mrs. Redway might safely count upon the safety of her husband, and when the other boats were reported, full particulars would instantly be communicated to her.

The offices were crowded by people seeking information, and Mrs. Redway was glad to squeeze out of the throng of persons more or less distracted; wives and daughters of sailors, and of the denizens of the engine-room, that centre of catastrophe and horror in steamship founderings; wives and daughters of captain and mates, who, having got the news from Falmouth in the afternoon, had rejected the assurances of the local officials, and fled from Southampton to London by rail for head-office verification; wives, daughters and parents of passengers more or less self-restrained, more or less hopeful, more or less distraught.

Mrs. Redway drove home. About a quarter before the luncheon hour the Chevalier Albert Garcia was announced. Mrs. Redway, who had bought on her return a copy of nearly every morning London paper then published, sat in her drawing-room engrossed by the narrative of the wreck in the *Morning Post*, and a leading article on the subject. She dropped the paper when the door was opened and the figure of the Chevalier appeared on the threshold. On that threshold he stood, rooted so far as fixity of feet could suggest that state. He gazed at the lady; then, extending his arms, began to nod at her with the most mournful and deplorable expression of face which his mustache and imperial accentuated as though they were crape; and whilst he nodded his head he moved his hands up and down from the wrist.

"Well," he exclaimed, after an extraordinary pause; "what are we to say about this?"

"I shall not despair," responded Mrs. Redway, in a tone of voice that proved her the complete governess of her passions and feelings. "A great deal of news has yet to arrive, and Alexander's safety may be included in it. But it is a dreadful shock," she added, with a sudden sinking of her head.

"He is safe. You may believe me," exclaimed the Chevalier, with dramatic vehemence."

"Do you mean to say——?" she inquired, with a swift eagerness that, if she had been any other woman, would have made her glow.

"No," he cried in his strongest voice. "I know no more than you. But there is a secret conviction here."

He clenched his fist upon which some diamonds sparkled, and smote the bosom of his shirt on which a diamond sparkled also.

"These secret convictions never erred with me. They are more than prognostications. They are the whisper of an intuition which is truth. I, Albert Garcia"—here he hit his shirt-front again—"affirm that in due course you will receive news of your husband's safety."

"It is very kind of you," said Mrs. Redway, who understood that this man was talking merely to keep up her spirits.

"You do not remember the life-buoy perhaps," said he, with a smile which I may call melodramatic. For Garcia's face in all forms of expression, whether in the frown or the smile, in the deadly severe gaze or the look of earnest benevolence, was always referred by the spectator's private judgment to a part in a piece fit for the homes of melodrama.

"I do. I was thinking about it a few moments ago,

and wondering if the poor dear fellow would have found time to make use of it. Won't you sit down?"

He seated himself and said, viewing her as though absorbed by tender consideration of the threat of affliction which had that morning come to her in the shouts of a newsboy—

"That life-buoy! L'homme propose, la femme dispose. I say this in no spirit disrespectful to the lofty sentiment of the original maxim. But it is true, nevertheless. It was he that proposed the voyage; it is you that shall dispose of it. Your life-buoy is more than hope. It is the real thing. It was your chef-d'œuvre of imagination. I see him in fancy floating in a circle consecrated by nuptial love. A boat approaches; the white circle is seen, a mariner bends over the side of the boat and drags into her the dripping figure of our Alexander. If you were a Catholic you would hang that life-buoy up as a dedicatory offering in a church, and there would be no holy memorial so eloquent in human appeal, so irresistible in its moving poetry of woman's love, as that white circle of your purchase, at once symbolizing the marriage ring and the sacramental cincture of wedded life."

He bowed to her as though she were the stalls and the pit, not to mention the stage boxes, and whilst his figure was regaining its usual theatrical carriage, the servant announced lunch.

"You will stop and lunch with me, Chevalier?"

He looked at his watch, and then looked at her, tenderly, as though it were his pity and not his appetite that consented, and making another bow, he arose, and she conducted him to the dining-room, carrying the dog with her, and leaving about eight copies of morning newspapers in a litter on the sofa.

There is no form of human anxiety that more greatly strains the heart than the expectancy that is bred of

sea-peril. Ashore we yearn for the safety of those we love at sea. At sea we pray for our lives for the sake of those who love us. The seaman lashed in the frozen rigging, pitilessly pelted by rain and hail, which, swept by the guns of the gale, smite him with the death-killing power of rifle-shot, turning his eyes glazing in death round about over the white wrath of the sea amid which the life-boat labours, reaching the foam-clouded wreck to find the sailor as dead as the hope in its cold sepulchre of heart; the mother who grows grey whilst she awaits with everlasting expectation the arrival of her darling boy in the long, long overdue ship; the wife, the husband, who every morning scan the daily journal for any—the barest paragraph of news that shall refer to the foundered ship, in which one or more of the beloved were crossing the seas;—what illustration of mental anguish—and how many more—within the power of man to submit to his mind's eye, can rival these?

This last form of anxiety was to be Mrs. Redway's, and expectancy was not to be ended in her by a communication from the Union Company at the end of a week, informing her that all four boats—and it was certain that no more had got away from the ship before she sank—were now accounted for: number one, as we have seen, by the arrival of the *Avonia* at Falmouth; numbers two and three, which had been fallen in with by a cargo steamer bound to Oporto, where the rescued people had been landed; number four by the French brig *Parisienne*, which had landed the people at Brest. The names of all the inmates of the boats, passengers, seamen, and men who worked in the engine-room, had been telegraphed by the consuls; and the list was duly included in the communication from the head office to Mrs. Redway: but her eye, to no purpose, sought for the name of Alexander Beauclerk Redway.

Of so many souls on board at the time of sailing, so

many had been rescued, and so many, it was feared, had perished. Of those of whom no reports had been received, the head office did not despair of hearing. It is true that eye-witnesses who reported the wreck, affirmed unanimously and absolutely that four only of the six boats carried by the *Princess Royal* left the ship, all of them full; but much floatable stuff in the shape of hen-coops, spare booms, gratings, hand-spikes, life-buoys, and so forth, would be left after the ship had sunk, or rise to the surface after she had touched bottom; and the head office trusted that more lives than those named in the list enclosed had been preserved by these means; and Mrs. Redway might rest assured that all items of further intelligence in any way bearing upon the possibility of the preservation of Mr. Redway, would be instantly despatched to her to any address she might be good enough to forward to the head office.

Not a grain of salt in this heavy soul-subduing mass of dough to render it digestible or palatable to kecking anxiety; and the Chevalier Albert Garcia, though he was frequent in visits of sympathetic hope rather than condolence, could say no more than that he was intuitively certain that Mr. Redway had not perished, and that therefore he must sooner or later be heard of.

"For," said he, in the large, dramatic and important manner which the foreigner, whether theatrical or not, will often assume when he teaches his grandmother to suck eggs—"for," said he, "you have to consider that this is the age of science, of the marine steam-engine and the electric telegraph. They are even talking of putting this country in electric communication with America." He started, and folded his arms, and frowned upon Mrs. Redway, as though appalled by the immensity of the scheme. "If they succeed, we shall soon be in communication by electricity with the whole of the world."

"But it has not happened," said Mrs. Redway, viewing him with eyes as cold as dew on a slate roof.

"No! It has not happened, as you say. But you can receive news by a flash from many places, at any one of which it is likely your husband may turn up; and what I mean to say is, that if Mr. Redway is alive, you cannot be kept waiting long, in this age of science, to be told that he will return to you."

Mrs. Redway saw very little meaning in this, and certainly nothing on which to bottom the most elementary kind of hope. But what could the Chevalier know of the dangers of the sea? When Mr. Redway had once invited Garcia to accompany him in a friend's yacht for a short trip, the Chevalier made a hideous face, and declared himself a very indifferent sailor.

"I should need a great temptation," he said, "to undertake a voyage and go upon the water merely for pleasure, to obtain no more than a sight of passing foam, to endure the motion of waves, to view scenes, at the risk of one's life, which are accessible by rail, or, at the worst, by a short Channel passage, which, God knows, is bad enough, even in calm weather—no! The good God designed me for the land; I have but to consider my legs, and reflect upon them when in action, to know that. Even the oscillation of a railway carriage affects me here." He took his fat throat in his sparkling hand. "I love to read about the sea, and the poetry of the sea, and when I am filled with the horrors of description, I like to dine, and to thank my good angel that there is nothing to hinder me from enjoying and digesting the dishes as nature intended men who are not fish."

Though not what is called a worrying woman, Mrs. Redway soon began to be worried with thoughts on mourning. For some weeks no further news of the disaster reached her; it seemed certain that no more than

the inmates of the four boats had escaped; there were a thousand chances to one that Mr. Redway had not owed his deliverance to a life-buoy, or a floating piece of wreck, otherwise surely by this time news of him would have been received. As the days rolled by, and no more outside the official enquiry was heard about the foundering of the *Princess Royal*, Mrs. Redway naturally grew more deeply and fully persuaded that her husband had been drowned, and her thoughts grew busy and diligent in the direction of widow's weeds. Ought she to clothe herself in mourning—would the adoption of widow's weeds be premature—would not crape subject her to the suspicion that she was a little too eager to accept the obligations of widowhood? Even a strong-minded woman will sometimes love a man to talk with, and take counsel of. Indeed strong-minded females have been known to seek the judgment of men, whose sex they deride in novels, essays, and in conversation, in preference even to the opinions of women. It was not wholly inconsistent, therefore, with her habits of thought and modes of general behaviour, that Mrs. Redway should consult the Chevalier on this question of going into mourning.

"It is horrid," she said, "to be seen in colours when there is scarcely a person I know who doesn't regard me as a widow."

He viewed her with eyes whose tenderness was not affected, as an expression of something deeper than friendly interest, by his black, curling, and knitted eyebrows and replied—

"If you are really persuaded that my dearest friend Alexander is dead"—(he shrugged his shoulders and extended his hands)—"then of course your duty to his memory is clear, and your grief should be made public by your attire."

"Have you abandoned all hope?" she inquired.

"No; my intuition is still strong. I have not abandoned hope," he cried, striking his knee with his clenched fist, "because I abhor the idea of being hopeless when my mind is concerned with the safety of a friend. But—day passes after day; it will be a month the day after to-morrow. The Union Company has nothing more to add to the information it has contributed. It is a matter, perhaps, for your solicitor, and I hope no question of law will arise to vex you. The contents of his will are not known to you. Is that will to be read?" He convulsed himself in silence with a shrug in which half his ears disappeared.

"How can it be read!" exclaimed Mrs. Redway, with emotion, "until." her voice faltered, "it can be proved beyond question that he is——" She could not bring herself to pronounce the word.

"Then," exclaimed the Chevalier, "if you are to wait for proofs, you cannot, until they arrive, consistently dress yourself as a widow."

She viewed him with troubled enquiry.

"If I were you," said he, "I would compromise. My clothes should be neither gay nor sombre. To put it as an artist, I would dress myself in a listening way; I should, by my raiment, express a tone of mournful attention and grieving expectation which yet should not convey the idea of bereavement. I suggest this as an artist," he said, with a sparkling wave of his hand.

She nodded in dubious approval, and then said, "It is impossible to guess how long one would be expected to wait."

"Do not, I pray you, trouble yourself about public opinion," he said. "You are superior to it. The time of conviction will arrive. You will then know what to do." After a short pause, he added, "Who has the custody of his will?"

"His lawyers."

"There will be trustees?"

"Executors, Chevalier."

"Ha! well, letters of administration cannot be taken out until you can furnish proofs of death."

"Oh yes," she answered, a little fretfully. "Mr. Sloane has told me that."

"At which rate," exclaimed the Chevalier, arching his eyebrows, "'it may be for years or it may be for ever,' as one of the songs you love says."

"I could not stand the strain. I should make up my mind" she rejoined, and her face took a sudden expression of severity which seemed to tighten yet the skin of it, and her high cheeks looked pale under the slate-blue light of eyes abruptly animated by perception of a complicated social and commercial difficulty.

A day or two before Mrs. Redway received the news that was to settle her mind as to mourning, she met with a dreadful blow. Her dog was sitting on the mat at the foot of the staircase awaiting the descent of its mistress to breakfast in the dining-room. Seeing the hall door ajar, owing to a boy having called with a parcel and the servant-maid running upstairs to ascertain if it was right, and hearing a dog barking on the opposite pavement, the creature sneaked out, and, when in the middle of the road, was run over by a hansom cab. It filled the air with shrieks of agony. The cook, recognizing the sound, rushed up the area steps, and as she picked the dog up, it expired in her arms. This dog had been Mrs. Redway's companion during her married life. It had grown venerable and senile in her lap, on her bed, in her carriage, in eating carefully cut-up mutton chop in saucers. She had loved to decorate its neck with a ribbon. She would suffer it, without much regard to the habits of dogs, to lick her mouth. Many old ladies might hold that it must be

more difficult to replace such a dog as this than a husband, particularly if he was middling or bad.

When the dead dog, in the state of nastiness which the wheel of a hansom cab will reduce a toy terrier to, was put down by the cook before Mrs. Redway, the lady shrieked, sat down and wept. She had reason for weeping for her dog, because she knew it was dead. She had not wept for her husband, no doubt, because she might still believe he was alive. Her mind was full of this lamentable tragedy and the loss of a beloved friend whose caressing tongue had been for ever stilled by the brutal heedlessness of a cabman, when the Chevalier Albert Garcia called.

"Well," he said, "it is a blow, and I can understand your feelings. But the poor beast was very old, and in the ordinary course of nature could not have lasted much longer. I beg you will compose your mind with that reflection."

"But I miss him at every turn," she exclaimed, by no means so passionlessly as she was in the habit of talking about the possibilities of her Alexander's deliverance. "He used to look up at me with more gratitude in his beautiful little eyes than ever I have seen in man, woman, or child, after he had eaten his breakfast."

"You will get another," said the Chevalier.

"Nothing in the world could ever take his place," she cried, with a vehemence that was singular in a person so self-contained in mind and practical in views.

The Chevalier viewed her tenderly under his heavy black eyebrows, and looked, whilst he curled one end of his mustache, as though he had something on his mind so weighty that it needed every prop of immense resolution to prevent it from bursting through and out of him in a wild and dramatic appeal which, had the century been younger than it was, would have flung him on one knee.

Just then the double knock of the postman was heard, and a minute later a servant entered the drawing-room with a letter on a silver salver. Mrs. Redway seized it, read the address and the imprint upon the sealed fly of the envelope, and exclaimed, with a sudden look of alarm, "It's from the Union Office." She opened the letter; she read it through in silence; the Chevalier watched her face as intently as a street organ-grinder watches a window with somebody in it who promises, by appreciative posture, to throw down a penny. Mrs. Redway had visibly paled during the reading. She read again, making no sound; then, with a faintly uttered, "Oh dear! how awful! It is too much for me!" she handed the letter to the Chevalier, and, bowing her head, concealed her tearless face in her hands.

Garcia read the letter to himself. It was, as we have heard, from the Union Steam Ship Company's head office. The secretary stated, in the most sympathetic language he could employ, that news had been received that morning of a corpse washed ashore upon the beach near the village of Finisterre. It had probably been nearly a month in the water, and it was scarcely distinguishable, even as human remains, through fish and the action of the sea. Its identity, however, was rendered absolute by the circumstance of its wearing a life-belt, on which was clearly painted the words, Alexander Beauclerk Redway. Would Mrs. Redway kindly state whether her husband had embarked possessed of a life-buoy thus distinguished? The trunk—it was little more—was clothed in the rags of what had obviously been pyjamas, but even if these pyjamas had borne the name or the initials of the wearer, the part which would most likely have received the mark was torn and gone. The remains, as a thing beyond recognition, had been at once buried by the Roman Catholic priest, who had forwarded the life-buoy and the

remains of the pyjamas to Santiago; and on receipt of such information as he trusted Mrs. Redway might be able to give, the secretary would write and request the immediate despatch to their head office of the articles named for identification, and they would either be sent to Mrs. Redway for her inspection, or detained for her to view as soon as she could possibly call after their receipt.

"This," said the Chevalier, folding his arms, with the letter dangling at his fingers' ends, "is terrible. It is ghastly, appalling, annihilating, but—'sunt superis sua jura. Spes tutissima cœlis.'"

As he delivered himself with a broad "a," Mrs. Redway, behind her hands, thought he was speaking Spanish, but was too much agitated to ask him what he meant.

"You will," said he, modulating his voice, with an artist's power, into sweetness, "of course write to the secretary and inform him that you purchased a life-buoy for your husband on which you caused his name to be painted, and you will say whether he took pyjamas with him or not."

"He took a good stock of pyjamas with him," she answered. "It is dreadful to think that the poor darling should have perished in the belt I purchased in the hope of saving his life in the event of the ship sinking. Two blows, one after the other," she continued, in the note of a moan, rocking herself. "I shall ask the secretary to send the buoy here for verification. It must be my husband's. There could not occur such a coincidence as two persons of the same name on board one ship."

"And both in possession of life-buoys painted with the same name. Absurd! Impossible!" exclaimed the Chevalier.

"But I shall be able to make nothing of the rags.

What do I know about pyjamas? How shall I be able to tell if the remnants found on the remains belonged to my husband?"

"The life-buoy is so tremendous a witness that you want no more," exclaimed the Chevalier, extending the letter and speaking, though low, with the enormous emphasis which his lungs could put into any part of speech he chose to accentuate.

"I hate the idea of going into the City to look at the things and be stared at," said Mrs. Redway, talking now quite passionately, whilst her eyes travelled about the room as though, in meditating a letter, she was thinking of pen and paper. "I will write. They seem very desirous to be all that's kind and considerate. I do not want to see the life-buoy, to know that I am alone."

She said this as calmly as though she were asking you how you are.

"Not alone, Mrs. Redway, whilst you can count upon the services of at least one ardent friend, and a man who loved your husband," said Garcia, clasping his ringed hands upon his knee, and leaning forward with a soft expression that was not exactly a smile, as though he were singing a light love-song to the strumming of a lute or a guitar but a little removed from the listening coquettish ear of the Bella Figlia of his verse.

She was silent, and he changed his face with the rapidity which expressed him a past master in mask-making.

"An idea comes to me," he cried. "I know an honest man who lives at Vigo. He is from the Basque Provinces. He keeps a pasado at Vigo. He is the son of a schoolmaster who taught my father how to read and write. Vigo is not very far from Finisterre. He shall oblige me by visiting the spot where the remains are buried, and by collecting from the priest and others all the

information that is to be got from people who, of course," he added, with a tremendous shrug, "have little more than a poor sea-tossed torso to tell us about. The good man will understand that I shall reimburse him."

Within an hour of the receipt of the secretary's letter, Mrs. Redway had answered it, and her request was to the effect which her conversation with the Chevalier has indicated to you. One feature of her husband's disappearance from the stage of life, however, could not possibly occur to her as an idea, simply because, now that her life-buoy had delivered its freight and message, she was as fully convinced, as any human being under the circumstances could possibly be, that her husband lay dead and buried in some cemetery or graveyard in the village of Finisterre. The feature I refer to was this—the total silence at sea and at Sydney as to Mr. Alexander Beauclerk Redway.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HONEYMOON

It is not certain that if Mr. Redway's misfortunes had occurred to him in this age, instead of upwards of forty years ago, he would have been heard of sooner as a shipwrecked man, mercifully delivered. The odds, however, against his safety being reported in time to avert an enormous moral and social disaster to his wife were no doubt out and away heavier in his day than they would be in this. All the remote parts of the globe were not connected by the electric wire as they now are. If steam was not still in its infancy, it was by no means plentiful, save in short channel trips and in the voyages to India. The Count Louis de la Ville on his arrival at Guadaloupe omitted to make an official statement touching the recovery of a shipwrecked Englishman found floating in a washstand. He spoke of the thing to his friends as an incident of a charming voyage which had refreshed his health and deepened his love for the sea, and it was repeated in Guadaloupe society as a remarkable anecdote of the ocean; but no more was made of it than that, and it was not certain that the story even found its way into the Guadaloupe prints. We have seen that Captain Buzacott overlooked the matter of Mr. Redway in his hurried interview with the British consul at Rio. Captain Skull, as he facetiously styled himself, of the show-ship *Skeleton*, had received no specific report of Mr. Redway's recovery, and

when, therefore, he arrived at Plymouth four months after the rencounter on the high seas, he had nothing to report but the name of the *Crimson Banner*, and the part of the world where he had fallen in with her. The Australian liner had signalled very few ships during her passage from Rio to Sydney, and those at such a distance as to admit of her making her number only. The long voyage of those times must also be considered. We know that the *Crimson Banner* took about five months and a half to get to Sydney from the Thames. What with the tedious and tardy arrivals of wool from the interior, and what with the running of seamen for the diggings, and the difficulty of finding men for the forecastle of a full-rigged ship, the detention of the *Crimson Banner* at Sydney covered a period of not certainly less than four months. The good ship occupied between four and five months more to crawl, or thunder, to roll and stagger, to the mouth of the Thames where the portly waggon would take a tug for her berth at Blackwall.

Thus considerably more than a twelvemonth must elapse before Captain Buzacott would be in a position to hand his official log in, and we must therefore cease to wonder at the silence of the press as to Mr. Redway's singular escape from shipwreck.

Not that we need doubt, had the news of a man delivered from a washstand in the immediate neighbourhood of the rock upon which the *Princess Royal* split, and within a few hours, so to speak, of her foundering, arrived, that the identity of the rescued person would have been promptly established. The name he gave—Alexander Beauclerk—must have proved suggestive enough without co-operation of description which, had he been a murderer, would have hanged him through irrefragable testimony of lineaments. His irrelevant and irresponsible talk of the *Sandown Castle* would have been imputed to a true

reason—perversion of memory. Therefore it came to pass that Mrs. Redway was not to receive news of her husband's safety within the time allotted by convention for widows to mourn. Mrs. Redway's mind had been made up before she saw the life-buoy. The secretary's letter was conclusive. Who but her husband in that ship could have borne his name? Who but her husband in that ship would have found an opportunity of using his life-buoy? She was perfectly well aware that he had shared a cabin with another; but as this man's name was not included in the list of the rescued, she, together with everybody belonging to the Union Company, was convinced that he was drowned; which, in other words, was assurance as positive as could be that he had not been able to keep himself afloat when the ship sank; and so, by issue of a very commonplace form of ratiocination, Mrs. Redway, with imperious conviction bred of trouble that is a commingling of grief and the resolution to believe the worst, decided on the evidence of certain remains found floating in a life-buoy, that she was a widow.

In which conclusion she ordered mourning, and she was dressed in widows' weeds, in which she looked ten years younger, and very interesting, with her large slate-blue eyes, somewhat languid and pale face wearing the memory-look of the bereaved, when she received by appointment a representative of the Union Steam Ship Company, who brought with him a bundle containing the life-buoy and some rags of pyjamas.

The Chevalier had been invited to meet the gentleman, to help Mrs. Redway to put questions, and he was present with a letter from Antonio Baltasar, of Vigo, in his pocket.

The representative was a tall gentlemanly man in dark clothes and a black cravat; he wore strong whiskers, and his eyes sought another's with diffidence. He was, so to speak, the Company's undertaker, and in this, and in other

employs, had gained experience in measuring the griefs of survivors or relatives for decent interment. He bowed low when he entered the drawing-room where Mrs. Redway awaited him pale in new deep mourning, with the Chevalier Albert Garcia in an armchair not far off. The representative opened the bundle and drew out the life-belt, at the sight of which Mrs. Redway brought her hands together convulsively, and her thin streak of lips grew almost white with compression with the effort to arrest the scream that was in her throat. It was an awful thing for the poor woman to look at. There was the name as ghastly clear as the letters on a new tombstone. In that white circle, a little rusty, perhaps, after its long romp in the sea, the man who had strained her again and again to his heart had died slowly—had died a most languishing and miserable death, the anguish of which could be known only to "the Eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality." She had some gift of imagination: the picture that life-buoy submitted was vivid in colour. She beheld the drowned man rise to the flickering crest, from which the salt was blown in a smoke of crystals; she saw the sea-bird hovering over him with curved neck and brilliant eyes and strong beak, breaking into cries; she witnessed with the swiftness of the visionary glance the gradual despoliation of those sacred remains, the mask of face vanishing out of all similitude to what was rememberable to the affection he had once professed and she had once requited; and in the narrow space of silence during which the life-buoy hung in the representative's hand, exposed to her, she saw it washed ashore on the strand of Finisterre, a relic of mortal suffering that was over, a shocking memorial to the foresight which had planned the gift and rendered its own identity of its dreadful burden as indubitable as the hands which she suddenly lifted to her face.

The representative stood up before her with bowed head, holding the life-buoy. Garcia broke the silence. He said in a low voice, through which ran a tremor—

"I may say that I was here when that life-buoy arrived painted to the order of Mrs. Redway. I recognize it. It is the life-buoy which Mrs. Redway presented to her husband, little foreseeing the tragedy it was to prove the stage of."

He too then sank his head and fell into a look and posture of awful despondency.

"Yes; it is the life-buoy that I gave my husband," said Mrs. Redway, disclosing her face, which was very pale, but wonderfully calm considering the short time her internal struggle had occupied. "Will you put it down upon the floor and take a seat?"

"I do not know, madam," exclaimed the representative, in soft and sympathetic tones, "whether a sight of these will be helpful to you as further testimony, but it was deemed proper that they should be shown to you."

He produced from the black linen cloth in which the life-buoy had been wrapped a bundle of dried rags. Mrs. Redway's line of mouth again turned white.

"The material," continued the representative, "is undoubtedly the stuff of which pyjamas are commonly made. The remains were clothed in nothing but these rags. They have been carefully explored for a hint of a name, whether in full or in initials."

"My husband," said Mrs. Redway, in a voice that was difficult with the strain she employed to steady it," purchased some pyjamas for this voyage. I had no time to mark or get them marked. Others which he took and which he used had his initials."

"The life-buoy is all in all," said the Chevalier, in a deep voice. "What more convincing witness could be

desired by the most exacting judge that ever tried a case of questionable identity."

"That is our unanimous opinion at the office, sir," said the representative, putting the rags away and sitting down.

"What was the colour of the hair?" asked Mrs. Redway.

The representative looked at her for a moment in silence. He then said quietly—

"You'll forgive me, madam, if I forbear entering into any particulars outside those facts."

He indicated the life-buoy and the parcel of rags. His reserve was understood. Mrs. Redway shuddered, and tightened the grip of her clasped fingers upon her lap.

"Forgive me," broke out the Chevalier, "but I have a letter here"—he felt in his pocket and produced an envelope—"received last evening, which communicates certain facts that ought not to be concealed, considering that the solicitors of my late dear friend and the solicitors of my dear friend Mrs. Redway both need proof positive of death before they can proceed in the matter of the will, and the property that our lamented Mr. Redway has left. Shall I read it to you?" he continued, fastening his large eyes full of excitement on the widow.

Mrs. Redway slightly inclined her head. The representative bowed and assumed a severe listening attitude. The letter was in Spanish. The Chevalier read it piecemeal in that tongue, and disjointly translated as he proceeded. Baltasar's communication was to this effect: on receipt of his noble and egregiously honoured friend's request he had hastened to Finisterre, and called upon the priest, whom he had rigorously questioned, and the substance of his answers he would give. The body had been discovered by a fisherman. It was stranded high and dry in the life-belt. The fisherman, helped by others,

bore the remains, just as they were found, on a plank to a venta or inn, and the priest, who was the governing spirit of the little place, was fetched. Humanly speaking the remains were almost obliterated; the likeness of God was gone. The good father had beheld much of horror in his day. The object he now viewed held him for some minutes dumb. It was apparelled in shreds of stuff which bore no name and furnished no hint of their character as wearing apparel whether of the night or of the day. It was firmly socketed by the armpits in the life-belt upon which the name of Alexander Beauclerk Redway was painted in striking black letters. The head was gone. The hands from the wrist, the feet from the ankles, were gone. The priest examined it for congenital or other marks upon the flesh. The only marks he could discover were bruises and lacerations caused by the inward and backward rushing of the heavy breakers ere they finally flung the thing beyond further reach of their white talons. There was hair on the chest and under the arm-pits; it was carefully washed with soft soap and warm water to liberate it from the veiling discolouration of the brine, and it was then seen to be a dark auburn. These were substantially all the particulars the priest could impart to Baltasar, who carefully noted them down. The father added that no purpose could be served by exhuming the remains, as the sole evidence of the identity of this bust of human mortality lay in the life-belt, which, with the rags, he had dispatched for transmission to such as were proper to receive them. Baltasar accompanied the priest to the graveyard, where the remains had been buried in the Roman Catholic service. Baltasar prayed that his noble friend would honour him with further requests or instructions. He would procure, if the Chevalier approved, a photograph of the grave. He would proceed with satisfaction to the honourable task of rearing over

the remains any such memorial duly inscribed as the Chevalier or the afflicted relatives of the deceased might desire.

Mrs. Redway listened to this dreadful disclosure with a face which gave no other signs of life than a slow motion of her eyes from the life-buoy to the letter from which the Chevalier read. When he ceased, she fainted. She fell back upon the sofa and lay as dead.

"*Dio mio!* I have broken her heart!" shouted the Chevalier, springing to his feet, and falling on one knee beside her.

"I guessed it would prove too much for her," said the representative, rising collectedly and preserving his wits, for, as the company's undertaker, he was not wholly unaccustomed to such situations. "Loose her collar. Let her breathe."

He stepped to the bell and rang it. The Chevalier violently pricked his fingers in removing her brooch and snapped his hand with a grin of pain as though he had been bitten.

"*Dio mio!* Come back, Mary. God's blessed life! It has proved too much. First her dog, then that life-belt, and now this letter. But—but . . ."

He seized the newspaper that was lying on the couch, and began to fan the white face with the wild erratic motions of a semaphore on the stern of an old wooden guard-ship. A servant arrived. Cold water and brandy were fetched; likewise lavender salts; and the housemaid slapped one lifeless hand whilst the representative slapped the other, and the Chevalier threatened extinction, so far as the breath of life by the nostrils is concerned, by plugging Mrs. Redway's nose with the bottle containing the smelling-salts. It took them about ten minutes to bring her to. She then drank a little cold brandy and water, but before she regained her senses the representative

concealed the life-buoy along with the rags in their cover, and put the bundle outside the door, requesting the housemaid to remove them from her mistress's sight, but to stow them in some place of safety when she left the room.

"I do not know," he said, "that I can be of any further service. You have no doubt, madam, that the remains as reported in the letter we have heard are those of your husband?"

"Oh yes, I gave him that life-buoy. The remains are his," the poor lady answered, in a faint voice.

It has been well said that the muscular suppression of an emotion does not repress the emotion itself, and that the emotional state is more likely to last if it does not vent itself in action. This is the reason why sailors in wrath flourish their fists at the quarter-deck, and blaspheme captain and mates in improvised chanties. Mrs. Redway, therefore, did well to faint, which was a sort of exhaustion of her pent-in feelings, so that she was now able to talk as calmly as if the case which had excited her grief were as stale as an old epitaph.

"It would be shocking," said the Chevalier, "to doubt that the life-buoy we have seen held the remains of my poor dear friend. For suffer that doubt to exist, and what must happen?" he continued, extending his arms. "My friend, Mrs. Redway, never could be certain whether she was a widow or not; the weeds she has put on would mock her dreams of hope; the property of her husband would lie as useless as the wheel of a water-mill when there is a drought in the land and the stream has dried up. For me, I am absolutely convinced."

He folded his arms so tightly that conviction seemed a mental anguish in him, and nodded slowly, blackly and heavily over them at the Representative.

"I fully share your opinions, sir," said that gentleman "and though I speak with pain, I feel bound, in the face

of this interview, and after having heard Mrs. Redway, to affirm positively that, so far as indisputable evidence can yield the truth, Mr. Redway is no more." He paused and then added, "I will leave the things in your charge, madam. Your servant will tell you where she has placed them."

Mrs. Redway begged him to take some refreshment. He declined gratefully, and bowed with an air of respectful commiseration, and the Chevalier strode to the bell to direct the servant to show him out.

"Well," said Garcia, coming to the sofa and seating himself by Mrs. Redway, "all your hopes and doubts are now at an end. If you are gifted in one way more than any other, greatly gifted as you are in all respects, it is in the art of taking practical views, and for your own sake, dear lady"—he put his hand upon hers and she allowed it to rest there—"you'll accept this blow as final and as the visitation of the good God who, doubt not, has His eye upon you and will not lose sight of one so faithful in memory and so eloquent in the womanly teachings of her life."

He pointed with a melodramatic gesture to the ceiling (and one might have guessed, by the soft, flat, out-curved forefinger, with which he took aim, that he played the piano well), still leaving his other hand on Mrs. Redway's.

"I shall write to my solicitor and he will communicate with Alexander's," said Mrs. Redway. "To doubt the evidence of the life-buoy would be, as you say, to involve me in an eternity of suspense."

"I ask, does Baltasar write in vain?" exclaimed the Chevalier, removing his hand from the lady's, to tap his breast where the letter lay.

"The auburn hair—— And then the rags, which I could see at a glance are of the material which composed his pyjamas," said Mrs. Redway.

"But the life-belt above all," burst out the Chevalier. "What is the auburn hair, what are the rags of the pyjamas, compared to the testimony that, if adduced in a trial for murder, would hang the prisoner at the bar?"

It will be seen that they were perfectly agreed. The Chevalier expatiated at length on the subject, pointing out that the circumstance of the body stranding on the coast of Finisterre was collateral evidence of the strongest character that it had been one of the people on board the *Princess Royal* when she foundered on striking the rock Insua. Mrs. Redway's remarks were also as practical as might be expected of a lady whose persistent effort of life was to try to see things as they are and not as she would like them to be.

But the Chevalier had an engagement; he was a very busy and a very important man; his was the alchemist's wizardry of transmuting time into guineas. He kissed Mrs. Redway's hand, hung a moment over her with soft glowing eyes, and said, "Yes, with the greatest pleasure," when she invited him to lunch next day. He was to be commanded by her in all things. Were they not old friends? Had not her dear husband been beloved by him? And so he took his leave, kissing his jewelled hand to her ere he vanished through the door.

In due course Mrs. Redway's solicitors, with the help of her lamented Alexander's, saw her through her difficulties. Letters of administration were applied for and granted, and before six months from the date of the finding of the life-belt had expired, Mrs. Redway, who had refreshed her health by a considerable stay in a fashionable boarding-house at Bournemouth, where she was constantly visited by the Chevalier, who would run down on a Saturday to Monday holiday—Mrs. Redway, I say, found herself a widow in the enjoyment of an income of from fifteen hundred to sixteen hundred pounds a year, a portion of

which she derived from property in India. Under these circumstances the reader doubtless will not be greatly astonished to hear that Mrs. Redway was married to the Chevalier Albert Garcia something a little more than twelve months after the "death" of Mr. Redway. The character of the navigation, and the nature of the postal and other communications of those times, as I have endeavoured to explain, rendered this marriage possible and respectable. Mrs. Redway mourned twelve months for her dear departed. This limitation of grief is the prescription of society who, after twelve months, suffers the widow to shed her weeds, to dry her eyes, and at the expiration of the winter of her discontent to enter into the April bonds of another marriage and the felicities of another honeymoon, without treating the poor lady as though she acts with unseemly precipitation and contemptuous disregard for the opinions of others who, if put upon their oath, would be obliged to swear that the matter was no business of theirs and that they were guilty of scandalous impertinence in expressing any views upon it.

The following notice was published in some of the London newspapers:—

> "GARCIA—REDWAY. On December 3rd, at All Saints Church, Kensington Park, London, by the Rev. Simon Pure, M.A., the Chevalier Albert Garcia to Mary, widow of the late Alexander Beauclerk Redway."

The couple went to Paris to spend their honeymoon. We have seen that Mr. and Mrs. Beauclerk spent their honeymoon at Bathurst, which is one hundred and forty miles from Sydney, and a city now remarkable for its beautiful park, fine streets, cathedral, noble hospital, and excellent library. Well would it be for these romantically placed couples, one brace at Paris, the other brace at this

time having made arrangements which are to end in a heart-moving drama, if the curtain could be dropped at once, the orchestra bundled away from their seats, the theatre swept of all spectators, and the lights turned out.

Whilst at Paris the Chevalier caught cold. He shivered in the carriage in which he and Mrs. Garcia were being driven from the opera to their hotel. He said with a rather wild smile when his wife, who was before all things practical, advised him to take a glass of hot brandy and water, and to sleep in a blanket, which she would roll him up in, "It is nothing; I shall be well in the morning." But in the morning he was so hoarse that the voice of a mother rook appealing to her young to keep quiet, and not fall over the edge of the nest, was melody compared to Garcia's croak. A doctor was sent for; he prescribed bed, an equable temperature to be maintained by fires, something to be taken inside, and something to be rubbed outside.

"This is spending a honeymoon!" said Garcia, in bed.

Men of the Chevalier's sort make bad patients. They are commonly very nervous, and their dramatic instincts operating unconsciously to themselves, they perform to the domestic eye as though they were in bed on the stage, and acting the part of patient for the plaudits of a packed house. If Garcia put out his tongue, his face behind it made it look a far more desperate tongue than ever his stomach or liver could have contrived. If his pulse were felt, he composed his countenance into the resignation of a martyr who looks upward whilst the executioner kindles the faggot at his feet. He was irritable, which was a sign of genius. He would say, for instance, in the note of laryngitis, "It is hell to be ill away from the comforts of home." He was so enraged the flavour of fat upon some beef-tea, that he sat up

in bed and roared to his wife to demand the cook's immediate presence that he might ask him in cold blood what the blue ruin he meant by undertaking to cook for an invalid, unless, indeed, he was paid to turn out sickly and sickening dishes that sufferers might be compelled to stop in bed at a daily cost that threatened insolvency, just the same as a seaside barometer in a hotel he knew, that, when tapped, always rose to lure people into holding out another day against the bad weather.

Mrs. Garcia nursed him patiently, but she was too practical and too passionless for the spirit of a man who lay sometimes almost speechless with wrath and sore throat, who swore in Spanish and in Italian, who would clutch his windpipe with a face that grinned horribly with fury, and refer to nature as the devil, who was the real maker of man, because if God were merciful would He choke a genius who lived by his voice with laryngitis, and fill him with aches and pains which might end in chronic rheumatism, and the bending of arms and legs into a state of helpless crippledom?

Fortunately for Mrs. Garcia, the Chevalier, at the end of a week, found himself better, but his voice was not what it was. He could not sing. A thread of huskiness ran through his utterance. He said to his doctor, striking the fat yellowish mass of flesh behind his heavy imperial, whilst he smiled like a wounded bandit, "How long is this to last?" then tightened his lips and watched the doctor with convulsive motions of his head over the arms he had spasmodically folded.

The doctor, with a shrug, answered that if he took great care he would get the better of it.

"It is my profession," wheezed Garcia.

"Do not tax yourself," said the doctor. "Your animation of spirits retards you. Be calm and persevere. This is a very bad time of the year for you."

"*Dio mio!* Don't I know it?" cried Garcia, smacking his brow.

"It is more than possible," said the doctor, "that you will stand in need of a complete change of climate. You want heat."

In proof whereof the Chevalier expended himself in a Spanish curse, whose length would occupy a line in this page.

One morning Garcia and his wife were sitting in a sumptuously furnished ladies' drawing-room in the hotel. They were reading the newspapers. The hotel was largely visited by English people. Garcia, who was naturalized, was more patriotic as a subject than the ordinary Briton, and abroad frequented places which Englishmen haunted, and was very proud of the beautiful character of the Queen as mother, wife and friend, and no man drank more heartily to the health of the royal family than Garcia, and he was fully as learned in the peerage as Mr. Beauclerk.

A waiter entered bearing some letters and newspapers on a salver, and placed them on a table before the Chevalier. All these letters and papers had been forwarded from Garcia's London address.

"Any for me?" inquired Mrs. Garcia, looking over the top of *Le Gaulois*. For though she spoke French with the accent of Bayswater, she read it with an ease that did honour to the several French teachers from whom she had learnt the language at the schools she went to.

"None," answered Garcia, hoarsely, running through the small heap. He began to read.

Mrs. Garcia fastened her eyes upon the pages of *Le Gaulois*. Suddenly an exclamation, harsh as the creak of a hinge, escaped the Chevalier, and his wife dropped her paper to stare at him. He was holding a letter, and exclaimed—

"This is extraordinary."

"What is it?" inquired Mrs. Garcia, in the insipid note of a woman who is not to be easily astonished.

"Here," said the Chevalier, frowning at the letter, "is a communication from my friend Alexis de Beerski."

"Who is he?" asked Mrs. Garcia.

"My agent. What do you think his letter is about?"

"How can I imagine?"

"Well," said the Chevalier, slowly, in the voice of a sore throat, and nodding with emphatic deliberation as he spoke, "I have often said that I am the Napoleon of music. I have my star and my destiny."

"We all have our destiny whether we have stars or not," said Mrs. Garcia.

"This," exclaimed Garcia, with unnecessary force of speech and manner, "is a coincidence which could not happen to an inferior person. I have laryngitis. My doctor tells me I require a change of climate. To obtain this I am expected to forfeit my professional gains. But —such is my star, such my destiny—in order that I may not suffer, I am offered the change I need, and am to be well paid to take it."

"Will you come to the point, Albert, and either read the letter to me or explain yourself?"

"Well," exclaimed the Chevalier, "De Beerski has received instructions from that celebrated Australian 'entrepreneur,' George Coppin, of Melbourne,"—he paused to observe if the name affected her, and contined—"to offer me the sum of two thousand guineas for one year's tour in Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania. Half the amount to be placed to my credit at my bankers on my signing the agreement."

Mrs. Garcia was not astonished. Her practical mind drew the skin of her emotion too tightly over its face to

admit of any room for play. She said as passionlessly as though she were suggesting a menu for lunch—

"Is two thousand guineas a good offer for you?"

He viewed her gloomily, lost in thought.

"Yes," he answered, after a brief passage of reflection. "Even for me it is a good offer. But it should be doubly good, since it will provide me with a change free, gratis, and for nothing which I know I shall be forced to take to get rid of this cursed trouble." He slapped his throat.

"When are you wanted?" inquired Mrs. Garcia, coolly.

"Now we come to the terms," responded the Chevalier, referring to the letter. "They are that I shall sail by steamer within a month after I sign the contract. By steamer so as to ensure punctuality, as the engagement will be largely advertised throughout Australasia. I am to appear as a vocalist and instrumentalist at Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Wellington, Hobart, God knows what other places," he went on, expanding in deportment, as though visibly swelled by the vast scheme.

"How about your voice?" said Mrs. Garcia, "and how will your leaving your pupils and other engagements for a year affect you professionally?"

"Don't you see," he cried, with impassioned hoarseness, "that with this throat I am good for nothing whether I stay at home or whether I go abroad? How can I teach singing when it is agony for me to speak? I must take a change—that is clear. The change will involve absence from home, and my pupils and my engagements must suffer, and there will be no requital for me excepting gain of health, which is a speculation. But if I accept this offer, I get the change at another man's expense, and if I am to improve by a change without requital, I shall stand an equal chance of benefiting in

health by a change with a requital. And I shall not be a loser, if my voice returns, pecuniarily; on the contrary, I shall have made two thousand guineas, and I may inform you that De Beerski says that all travelling and hotel expenses will be paid. After a short silence, during which he sat frowning in reflection, he said, "If I consent, will you go with me?"

"Certainly. I shall not risk a second separation," she answered, as coolly as though she had been allowed a fortnight to think the matter over.

"You are quite right," he said. "And what do you think of the proposal yourself?"

"I take your views," she replied. "If a change is imperative, Mr. Coppin's offer makes the necessity practicable and convenient."

"I will have a careful talk with Doctor Baudin," said the Chevalier. "He shall examine me again. If he thinks I shall get better soon, so as to be able to resume my profession, you and I will seriously weigh the offer in this letter, and determine whether we shall be wise or not in accepting it. If, on the contrary, Baudin declares that I must winter out of Europe to perfectly recover my voice, then my mind will be settled, and until I see Baudin I will wait before I answer De Beerski's letter."

"Suppose, on your arrival at Melbourne, your voice is still hoarse and practically gone?"

"Suppose—suppose—suppose!" cried the Chevalier, with the demeanour of suppressed frenzy. "Will it not equally be gone whether I go or not? If I go I stand the chance. If I don't go—suppose!"

"You work yourself up too much," said Mrs. Garcia.

He made a report with his tongue like a hammer on a nipple, and left Mrs. Garcia to read *Le Gaulois* alone.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE *GREAT BRITAIN*

Mrs. Garcia retained the house she had occupied as Mrs. Redway in the neighbourhood of Colville Square. It was a comfortable home; the Chevalier thought it particularly so; the furniture was very handsome, was still good as new, fitted the home, there had been no children to climb upon the chairs, to make slides upon the carpet, and to pull valuable china from the mantelpiece. The house suited the Chevalier perfectly as a residence. For professional purposes he proposed to continue the occupation of the central chambers where he had been in the habit of receiving pupils, dating his letters, and whence he had driven to theatres and to private houses to fulfil engagments.

Before the honeymoon pair left Paris, Doctor Baudin, at the request of the Chevalier, called in a distinguished authority on the throat in consultation. Though Garcia was by naturalization an eminently patriotic subject of the Queen, he held a higher opinion of French doctors than he felt for English doctors, who, he said, were nearly always wrong in their first-hand diagnosis, so that their clinical syllogism, starting with the first term wrong, led to fallacious deductions, and men grew worse in proportion to the multiplication of prescriptions. The distinguished Parisian doctor carefully examined Garcia, and fully supported the opinion of Doctor Baudin that not

only did the Chevalier require a term of perfect rest from the exercise of his voice, but that grave symptoms might later on manifest themselves if the remedy of a thorough change of scene and climate, and a prompt withdrawal from the dangerous winter of northern Europe, was not speedily applied.

"What do you say to a voyage to Australia?" inquired Garcia.

"Admirable. Nothing could be better," rejoined the distinguished doctor.

"It is long, and at sea. Not being a sailor, you are not tempted to exert your throat," said Doctor Baudin.

"May I start with the hope that my throat will be well before I arrive at Melbourne?" enquired Garcia.

"I have no hesitation in answering yes to that question," replied the distinguished doctor.

"Things cannot last for ever, as the colonel said when the handle of a door came off in his hand," observed Doctor Baudin, with a cheerful smile.

This opinion confirmed the Chevalier in his resolution to accept Mr. Coppin's offer, but as he was a very bad sailor, and viewed the prospects of a long voyage with dark misgiving and secret sleep-breaking alarm, which certainly was not without its reference to the idea of Mr. Redway's body in a life-belt, he determined to find out all about the steamer he proposed to sail in, by calling at the London office of the Liverpool owners before signing the contract which lay ready for his pen at De Beerski's.

Thus, at the beginning of this book, so now, do we find a husband, bent upon going to sea, visiting the offices of shipowners to make inquiries concerning a voyage for health.

The Chevalier drove to St. Mary Axe in a four-wheeler, with the windows up. No open victoria for him,

thank you, at the end of December in London, with a throat which was the very grave of his old voice, that rose out of it, a hollow sounding ghost. Mr. Redway had asked questions of a gentleman in spectacles at the Union Office. By a coincidence the gentleman who confronted the Chevalier on his arrival at St. Mary Axe also wore spectacles, behind which he blinked, whilst his breath wheezed in sympathy with his eyelids. A yellow fog was brooding upon London that day; gas gasped in starting gushes of light in the shops; people coughed over their comforters through the white steam which sped from their nostrils; if life was not all mud it was only because a portion of life was visible; the atmosphere was a tangible volume of yellowness and particles of soot; in certain streets in the city, groping men walked their blinded faces against the cold damp noses of motionless cab horses. The Chevalier unrolled his white knitted wool comforter, as though he were peeling an apple, and seated himself on a three-legged stool on this side a counter, on the other side of which, illuminated by two gas lights with green shades, was the agent for the Liverpool owners, in spectacles.

"Your ship, the *Great Britain*," said Garcia, "is announced to sail from Liverpool to Melbourne on the 5th February."

"That is quite right, sir."

"Before I book a cabin, with two berths in her, I should like to know," said the Chevalier, "what sort of a ship she is."

"The most magnificent steamer in the world, sir, and down to June last year, the biggest."

"Why is she not the biggest now?"

"Because the *Great Eastern* is afloat."

"Does the *Great Eastern* go to Australia?"

"No, sir—nor is likely to."

"This *Great Britain* of yours; is she a strong ship?"

"When I tell you she was built in 1843, and that shortly after she was launched she went ashore at Dundrum Bay, on the coast of Ireland, where she lay for a whole winter, beaten by the enormous breakers of the Atlantic, without sustaining any injury, and has been making ever since swift splendid voyages to remote parts, you may suppose she is a very strong ship indeed."

"I do not like the idea of her having been once wrecked," said the Chevalier. "How do I know that there is not a secret hole in her which may at any moment cause her to leak through her having been cast upon the rocks?"

The agent smiled and rejoined, "There are no other holes in her than those you enter her by. There is nothing stauncher on the wide world of waters."

"Does she roll very heavily?"

"Her extraordinary steadiness is one reason of her popularity," answered the agent. "I may venture to point out that when she was in the Thames she was visited by the Queen and Prince Albert, who regarded her as the most wonderful sample of shipbuilding skill in the world."

The agent's eyes wandered to a painting of the ship hanging on the wall within the glow of the gas. The Chevalier was impressed. The word royalty was a sound that never could appeal to him in vain. Yet he overlooked the circumstance that the countenance of royalty cannot make a full circle of the blind rivet hole, nor adjust the ill-fitted davits for the easy descent of panic-stricken passengers and sailors.

He looked at the picture, and beheld a ship with one funnel and six masts crashing through a heavy sea, which lifted in vast white tongues to midway the height of her monkey-spars. A broad white band, broken by painted

[illegible]

"[illegible] very [illegible]," said the Chevalier. "[illegible]"

"[illegible] the [illegible] by the [illegible]," [illegible] the agent.

"[illegible]," [illegible] the Chevalier, "[illegible] is going [illegible]."

"[illegible]," [illegible] the agent, [illegible]. "Only [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

shipwreck there is always one chance of a man escaping, though that one chance may be opposed by nine hundred and ninety nine chances of his having perished."

Garcia gazed at the picture of the steamer, partly thinking of the ship, partly listening to the agent. As the agent paused, the Chevalier, actuated by politeness merely, observed, "You were saying——?"

"Oh yes. But I don't think my cousin would have got the chance. All accounts represent the captain and the mates going down with the ship. An Australian liner, called the *Crimson Banner*, arrived some days ago in the Thames from Sydney. The paragraph in the journal I mentioned states that in some part of the sea north of the equator she received on board a man who had been rescued by a French yacht. I forget the man's name. I will look at the file."

He half turned on his seat to rise.

"Do not trouble," exclaimed the Chevalier. "Was he a man belonging to the *Princess Royal?*"

"No. They found him floating in a washstand. He stated that his ship was the *Sandown Castle*, and that he was proceeding as a passenger to Sydney in her. The *Crimson Banner* landed him in Sydney, where he married a lady whom he had met on board of her."

"Was he your cousin?" enquired the Chevalier.

"Oh dear, no! My cousin was a married man, sir. The name of the shipwrecked fellow—— I have it—— Beauclerk. Yes, Beauclerk."

It will not be surprising to hear that the pronunciation of this name did not produce the faintest impression upon the mind of Garcia, nor excite the smallest emotion of any sort. Because for months past it had been the habit of his understanding to think of Mr. Redway as drowned and gone; second, because there was no quality or character in the name of Beauclerk as a surname to make

him find it suggestive in the faintest sense of Redway; third, because it could not enter his head to conceive that the practical, clear-headed, veracious Mr. Redway would call himself Beauclerk; and fourth, because if he had been visited by the dimmest suspicion that this rescued Beauclerk was his friend Redway, the idea must have been instantly wiped off his mind by the statement that the rescued Beauclerk had married on his arrival at Sydney.

"Well," he said, bringing his eyes away from the picture of the *Great Britain*, "the sea is full of wonders, and, as the saying is, those who go down into it see them, and sometimes the rocks it contains. I will book a cabin for two to Melbourne."

They then went to business, and when a cheque had been drawn and a berth selected (from a diagram submitted by the agent), the Chevalier swathed his neck in the comforter, and was driven to Bayswater in a four-wheeler, with the windows up. He was as hoarse with the fog and his bad throat as the wheezy old cabman on the box, when he enquired and paid the fare. The servant informed him that the Reverend Simon Pure was with Mrs. Garcia. The Chevalier did not love the clergy; he did not understand them. Their language on the subjects of beanfeasts, harvest festivals, mothers' meetings, and the like, were unintelligible to this gentleman, who sang in opera and at concerts, and who was distinguished as a teacher of singing. He pulled off his top-coat and entered the library, where he wrote a letter to De Beerski, stating that he had booked a cabin for himself and wife to Melbourne by the *Great Britain*, and asking him to dinner next day, and to bring the copy of the agreement with him for his signature. By the time this letter was finished and the Chevalier had smoked two or three cigarettes—nothing stronger in

tobacco was permitted—Mr. Pure had departed, and Garcia joined his wife in the drawing-room.

"Well," said he, "the die is cast. I have booked for you and for me the best cabin I could secure."

"There is nothing like making up your mind to a course and sticking to it," she replied, undemonstratively.

"What does Pure want?"

"Oh, nothing that will interest you. What is the size of the *Great Britain?*"

"What do I know about tonnage?" answered the Chevalier. "They call her about three thousand tons. The words are mere sounds to me. She will not be so big but that she will roll and pitch, although the person I saw declares her to be as steady as an island in the heaviest sea."

"We must lose no time in making ready. I had better get a large box made expressly for the hold. They place heavy goods upon ladies' delicate trunks, and one's finery is easily jammed out of shape. I shall want to make a few purchases—not many. I suppose it's as well to get your name painted in strong characters upon your boxes. I have made up my mind to dismiss all the servants but Jane, and she can remain with her mother to look after the house, and I shall leave the keys with Sewell and Sewell, with orders to call once a week to see to things."

"Oh yes—oh yes!" broke in the Chevalier; "all this is quite right and quite easy. I am all the time thinking why it is that the doctors do not discover a remedy for sea-sickness. They patronize quack rubbish, and you are poisoned by their assurances; but when it comes to a simple malady like the nausea of the sea, which has driven people ashore in a dying condition, they are powerless, they shrug their shoulders like imbeciles, who are deaf, and their science is as useless as the big words with which they name the diseases they cannot cure."

His hoarseness added a note of irritability to his language, and he paced the room with the energy of bad temper.

"Why don't you buy a cot that swings like a tray?" see asked with the calmness that is always provoking to a heated man.

"A cot! Yes!" He stopped and bent his impassioned eyes upon her, glowing under their heavy eyebrows. "I see," he continued, with an urbanity that was horribly ironic with surpressed wrath, "that you have not yet succeded in grasping the physiology of sea-sickness. A cot!" he shouted, adandoning himself to his feelings. "That is, you swing like this, and like this." He motioned with his hand as though he held a baton, and was starting an orchestra. "But is it not this, and this; it is *that* and THAT"—he hoarsely roared, heaving his arms up and down, as though he were a top-sawyer with a heavy baulk of timber between him and the under man—"that plays the devil with the intestines. You sink down and leave your brains behind you in your hat; and then you are thrown up, and you leave your boots behind in your cot. What is there in a cot to remedy this? I wish to God now, that I had not booked the cabin."

"I do not see why this matter cannot be discussed calmly, Albert," said Mrs. Garcia. "You are not sick yet, at all events, and who's to know that you will be?"

He darted a glance of fire at her, and folding his arms, fell to pacing the room afresh. After a short pause, he exclaimed—

"I asked the agent what would happen if this beautiful ship was to strike a rock like the *Princess Royal*."

"What was his answer?"

"That she would split the rock."

She smiled slightly.

"His brother," continued the Chevalier, "was mate of

the *Princess Royal.*" The agent had called him cousin, but the Chevalier loved to impress when he repeated stories.

"Was he saved?" inquired Mrs. Garcia.

"No more than we shall be if the *Great Britain* strikes a rock. They found a man in a washstand not far off the rock the *Princess Royal* struck. His name was Beauclerk."

"Beauclerk!" she exclaimed, with a start, and a swift hardening of sensation in the expression of her face.

"Yes. There was some newspaper paragraph about it in a shipping journal. The news was brought home by a ship from Australia. He was taken out of the water by a French yacht. His ship was called—I forget the name; and they left him at Sydney, where he got married."

She listened intently. "What was the name of the ship?" she inquired.

"What ship do you mean?"

"The ship he was wrecked in?"

"I forget. Write to the agent, and he will send you the paper containing the report. I do not like the subject. Here we are, about to prepare for a long voyage, and talking about shipwrecks. You will not buy me a life-buoy, I hope."

She glanced at him with a face that was slightly agitated, and suddenly rising, went to her bedroom, where she was in the habit of writing letters.

Before she wrote she sat down to think. Beauclerk! That was the name the Chevalier had pronounced. But that was all. It was not a name to her as Redway was a name; yet the man who bore it had been wrecked and rescued, and one of her husband's names was Beauclerk. And this it was that set her thinking.

The perception of truth is often an intuition whose light is obscured or eclipsed by fallacy as impenetrable

to illumination as conviction itself. This was the case with Mrs. Garcia. The first motions of her intelligence in the corridors of her mind were a groping for the outlet that was immovably sealed by habit of thought—that is, the habit of thinking of her husband as dead. But for the testimony of the life-belt she might have believed he was alive, and the passage of months, nay, of years, would not have extinguished this imagination which, now that she was wedded to another, was not very likely to be a hope. Her first husband was dead; he was buried; she could visit his grave. She could not conceive then another state of things, even had she dared attempt the task. But all the same, intuition wrought in her like a blind fish circling deep down; and though every sensation was too faint to make a part of active idea, it was hers, nevertheless;—in stirrings of dismay; the chill of the spiritual shudder caused by one knows not what; the sickness of the fear that is without shape; the dread that, though less tangible than the substance of a dream, dwells like a cloud in whose shadow the heart beats sunless.

Her first letter was to the secretary of the Union Steam Ship Company. She asked him to be so good as to inform her whether any person of the name of Beauclerk, whether passenger or sailor, was on board the *Princess Royal* when she was lost. The other letter she addressed to the agent for the owners of the *Great Britain*, and begged him to be so kind as to send her at once a copy of the *Shipping Gazette* in which was the paragraph referring to the rescue of a gentleman named Beauclerk. Both these letters were posted immediately after they were written. Her capacity of self-containment was so considerable than Garcia, even if he had given her more than ordinary heed, could not possibly have guessed at any secret, subtle perturbation of mind in her. Not, indeed, that her mind was sufficiently perturbed for demonstration,

but she could not deny to herself a sense of uneasiness which was troublesome wholly on account of its indefiniteness.

The Chevalier, who on the merits of his throat, was now a man of enforced leisure, found nothing to talk about at dinner and after but the voyage, his conviction that he would be sea-sick the whole way, his reception on his arrival, and the like. He never once referred to the subject which he did not know was occupying his wife's mind. Why should he have alluded to it? To him the agent's gossip had been no more than if it was based upon a police report or an item of news of a man having been killed by a Japanese at Yokohama. The name was Beauclerk; the man had been going out as a passenger to Sydney; he had married in that city. What suspicions could Garcia fasten upon such statements? The matter had slipped from his mind when he departed from St. Mary Axe; he had picked it up to speak to his wife about it; it had then slipped again for good; and nothing was left but Garcia in shrug and posture-making, Garcia on the ocean sea-sick, Garcia bowing to crowded houses in Australasia, Garcia with the chance of arriving at Sydney voiceless, Garcia magnificently equipped by the climates of the deep for ravishing the souls of antipodean listeners, and starting on his return home like a rejuvenated giant on his glorious career of teaching and fiddling.

The first post next morning brought to Mrs. Garcia the reply and the newspaper she had solicited. The secretary of the Steam Ship Company informed her that no person of the name of Beauclerk was in the list of the passengers of the *Princess Royal* nor on the articles of that ship. He added that he had seen the newspaper paragraph which he presumed had induced Mrs. Garcia to address him, and he begged to inform her that inquiries had been made of the persons who had authorized the

publication of the statement, and that the evidence collected convinced his directors and himself that the rescued man was not on board the *Princess Royal* when she struck, but that he had been a passenger in a composite barque named the *Sandown Castle*, bound to Sydney, N.S.W., where he had married a lady who was a passenger on board the ship *Crimson Banner*, which had received him from the French yacht, *La Belle Poule*, and amongst the witnesses to that marriage were the master and surgeon of the *Crimson Banner*.

Such was the information supplied by the secretary of the Union Company, and Mrs. Garcia drew an easy breath when she put the letter down and opened the copy of the *Shipping Gazette*.

The passage was marked in blue pencil, and Mrs. Garcia easily found it. It was in substance all that was related by the agent to the Chevalier, and repeated by the secretary of the Union Company to Mrs. Garcia. She read the paragraph with deep and breathless attention. She read it once—she read it twice; then put the paper down with a soft shake of head and a face whose expression of a relieved heart was as though a bright and gilding light had suddenly irradiated her countenance. It was not only that the ship in which this man Beauclerk had sailed was called the *Sandown Castle* and not the *Princess Royal*; that she was a sailing ship and not a steamer; that her port of destination was Sydney, N.S.W., and not Cape Town; not these, though they would have gone a very long way to soothe the uneasiness of her mind, whose monitions, though faintly sensible, were too profoundly mysterious for the interpretation of her intellect: the one victorious persuading quality of this item of news in the *Shipping Gazette* lay in the impossibility the poor lady found of reconciling the idea of her husband with that of the marriage of this rescued person Beauclerk. Could she

suppose that Alexander had forgotten he had left a wife at home? He so discreet, so honourable in all relations, so truthful even to the risk of exciting hostility by careful and deliberate caudour, to commit bigamy—the horrid crime of bigamy—for no imaginable reason! For would you suppose that this unhappy lady could conceive that her husband had lost a considerable portion of his healthy reason by shipwreck, and that in perfect good faith he had entered upon a passage of curiously sequential lies terminating in an act which, if he could be proved sane, would lock him up? If this is to be supposed, then we are to imagine that the whole truth of something which had happened in remote parts, of something utterly at variance with our experience of the individual or persons to whom that something is a stage, may come before our mental vision as a scene in a panorama to our mortal sight. Which would be an absurd presumption, the acceptance of which must necessitate a belief in dreams and omens and charnel impulses.

But the thread that would have unravelled the tangled skein was perilously close, and would have been grasped had Mrs. Garcia remained a widow, always hoping. Captain Buzacott had arrived in London; he would cheerfully have communicated all he knew to Mrs. Garcia, and all that he knew would have made her understand by description of the man, and by several sidelights, that the rescued person Beauclerk was unquestionably her husband, Alexander Beauclerk Redway. Why she did not pick up this thread was because she did not think of it. And if it is possible for inclination to influence us without the cognisance of our mind—not, indeed, of its activity, but of its very presence—then certainly Mrs. Garcia would have found herself strongly indisposed to pursue the subject of her husband's identity, or death even, if the idea of Buzacott for an interview

had occurred to her. By a ludicrous coincidence hers indeed was the same case as that of Mrs. Ramsay. This charming lady, as we have seen, had been too intent upon winning a social position for herself to very carefully scrutinize the rungs of the ladder by which she intended to climb. She wanted what was on top, and if now and again, in a sleepless hour of bunk, or in a watchful moment on deck, she spied or heard something in her man that should have given her pause, she did not pause, because her eyes were fixed upon the crowning point only of the canvas of her ambition, and to the rest of the picture she was predeterminedly blind. So of Mrs. Garcia; if she was secretly influenced by intuition, too deep-seated for construction by the intellect, her situation made her much too morally weak to look closely into a circumstantial truth whose very name, whose very aspect, whose merest possibility of being, would have driven her practical judgment into a spiritual recoil beyond the limits of sanity.

She put the newspaper away. She placed the secretary's letter in a drawer. Her first husband was dead; that was certain if nothing else were, and she composed her mind without great effort to this attitude of thought.

The Chevalier returned to his wife, after he had watched from his hall door his friend and agent, De Beerski (who was slightly in liquor), lurch and vanish in the enfolding shadow of a hansom cab. The drawing-room was warm in light and in colour; plenty of red in the rich carpet, and some cloth of gold here and there as furniture-trimming to catch the rays of the burners which shone in tinted globes. Pier glasses and other mirrors reflected the shape of the Chevalier and that of his wife, who sat in a low easy-chair, with her large moon-cold eyes dwelling in passionless repose upon her husband.

"Well," said he, "the contract is signed. I am now bound. I have sold myself. I hope I have not signed with my blood. *Dio mio!* what shall I do if I arrive at Melbourne without my voice?"

"Did you put that to Mr. de Beerski?"

"Yes. He said, 'In any case you must leave England.' 'Well?' said I. 'Well,' he said, 'think of this as a trip for your throat.' 'Well?' 'Well; if your throat is still bad, you will have tried the remedy that your doctors prescribe, and tried it with a very good chance of making two thousand hard sovereigns. If your throat recovers, the prescription will be the cheapest that a patient ever paid a doctor for."

"That De Beerski is no fool," remarked Mrs. Garcia.

"I wish the passage out was all. I have to come home again. Why is this country surrounded with water, so that a man cannot leave it without being sea-sick? Why, in God's name, was it not discovered in Africa or South America, where, without seeing the ocean, a man could travel a thousand leagues and stop in any climate that is good for him?"

"But you may not be sea-sick," exclaimed Mrs. Garcia, with aggressive placidity. "You should lose your habit of anticipating difficulties, which merely causes you to suffer the trouble that may never happen."

"Yes," he answered, nodding at her ironically. "I should be like you, without nerves. Do oysters anticipate trouble? It may be because they are not inspired by the genius of music. Does the crab or the lobster, when he is on the sand, worry himself with the idea of putting out to sea? It may be because neither the crab nor the lobster comes into life with the spirit and the idealisms of the master of the violin. When you are born a man you cannot help feeling as a man."

She found nothing to smile at in the wit that compared

her to an oyster, not to mention a lobster; nevertheless, she thought him a very handsome man, a man of great genius, an incomparable face-maker, thanks to the spaciousness of the mental stage which his comic or tragic emotions trod.

He stepped about the room, sometimes pausing to view himself in a glass: a well-made, sufficiently tall, striking person, powerful in feature and deportment, eyes glowing with the light of intellect, pale olive skin, that accentuated into romantic fierceness the up-curling sweep of ebony mustache, and equally black rope of imperial. He was in evening dress: a diamond blazed on his shirt front; two bights of massive gold chain decorated his waistcoat. Nothing was wrong with him but his voice. But she did not find that the prodigious emphasis of his large, stout, well-fed individuality lost anything by the deliverance of his mind in croaks, gasps, and notes coarse and weak as the voice of an ass, in a distant field, heralding rain. Making nothing of the simile of the oyster beyond thinking of it for an instant, Mrs. Garcia exclaimed—

"Play that Hungarian rhapsody, which you said one of your pupils—I forget her name—so greatly admired."

"Mrs. Ramsay. Hungarian rhapsody! I feel in a mood for rhapsodies! She was a fine woman, rich as a gold mine. Richer, I dare say, for I have known men, who, as shareholders, have not found gold mines very rich. I have taught a great number of fine women with fine voices, but I never had a pupil that beat Mrs. Ramsay in intelligence, sympathy, and instinct—not even yourself, Mary," added the Chevalier, looking at her, as though musing upon her. "Come, since you ask me, I will play the thing to please you."

He sat down and played one of those compositions

with which Mrs. Ramsay on board the *Crimson Banner* had charmed the squinting spirit of Mr. Beauclerk. The weather was in sympathy with the listener; never did there hang a denser fog over the Bayswater end of London than the thickness that darkened that night.

CHAPTER XXIV

[illegible] AT SEA

We are once more at sea, and one of our company is another husband. His name is the Chevalier Albert Gencin. The mother has loved him neither wisely nor well. For three weeks that stout well-found ship the *Great Britain*—as famous in the annals of shipbuilding as the *Great Eastern*—has wrestled with the fiend of disease, has lifted her bows to God whilst sinking her stern to the devil, has rolled and groaned and tossed and staggered her three thousand tons of bulk through the spectral hollows and the roaring ridges, at a speed varying from nine to twelve knots, and with her metal sickle or cutwater she has reaped the sea into a harvest festival of flashing stalks and ears of foam. The stability and freedom from motion which had been promised to the Chevalier by the agent were wanting. This was the opinion of Gencin, who did not leave his cabin for three weeks.

Had he gone on deck he would have witnessed a shapely metal structure, stately with funnel and many masts, parting the thunderous surge into magnificent cataracts on either hand of her. He might—but I don't think he would—have admired the broad and shining [illegible] she left behind her, as though her conquering [illegible] ran over a road, down valleys and up mountains [illegible] her in immeasurable length past the cloud-

touching surges of the sea, past the smooth plains in which the sun by day and the moon by night found a mirror for their grand or gentle glory, to the haven under the globe to which the ship was bound. He would have heard the water sobbing like drunken sailors in the scuppers, and marked the damp and glistening shadow of wet upon the forecastle, where the figures of men gleaming in oilskins might be witnessed in motion coming and going and dodging the drench of crystals, stinging like hail-stones from the slings of the wind, as they ran or sprang to the cries of command. He would have plucked up heart by observing that—thanks to the skill of that necromancer, Steam, who sat grinding his spells in a cavern radiant with the tireless dance of brass and steel in piston and crank, in shaft and crossheads, lurid with the sudden glow of furnace, resonant with the sordid clangour of shovels—every foul wind was a fair wind to the *Great Britain*. How much so, he might have known by noting the sailing ships she passed, the leaning shadows, gaunt in half-stripped apparel, smiting with shuddering bow the weather surge, half vanishing in breathless moments in the salt haze of their own creation, wet and draggled, much like an "unfortunate" hooked up half-drowned from under some "Bridge of Sighs," with the attire which is very fine at noon or by star, clinging in wet feather, in plastered ribbon, in skirt that defines the shape it conceals, shocking in sadness, and as cold to the heart as the breath of a vault.

But for three weeks the Chevalier did not go on deck. Never was a passenger more sea-sick. He was one of those actors who could not be visited by a natural impulse without dramatizing it. His face was a nightmare of human suffering. His most impassioned admirer must have viewed him with volcanic revulsion of feeling had she beheld him lying in his bunk, with all the imperious

dignity of his mustache vanished in the mere ropes'-ends which neglect had dropped them into, his skin of the hue of yellow soap, his eyes bloodshot and upturned, his hair wild upon the pillow like a nest of escaping adders.

Mrs. Garcia, on the other hand, suffered slightly, and in a day or two from the date of sailing was well and about. She helped the steward in nursing her husband, and failed to see that her cool and practical ministrations, her placid remonstrances, and passionless invitations to him not to make himself worse than he was, but to try to bear it, were like brandy to a drunken man—no longer a stimulant, but an inflammatory agent which heightened the irresponsible wrath and promoted the physical distress.

He cried out once that he wanted to see the doctor. The doctor was some time in coming. He was performing a delicate operation in the steerage, and he was being watched by an Irish husband and three Irish cousins of the patient (the cousins drunk), and the ship was rolling so heavily as to make foothold difficult even to the ship's cat. Foreseeing that he had been called for nausea, which he could not control, the doctor flung open the door of the Chevalier's berth, and said sternly to Mrs. Garcia, who was holding on to the side-board of her own bunk, "What is it?"

"I am dying," said the Chevalier.

"Nonsense," answered the doctor.

"I am sure he need not give way to his sensations so completely as he does," observed Mrs. Garcia, swinging with the reel of the deck as she spoke.

"Look here," shouted Garcia, in a voice by no means so hoarse as it had been when he joined the ship, and darting upright to the waist by his elbows crooked like grasshopper's legs, "bring me a knife!" He tore open

the collar of his shirt, and exposed his fat shaft of yellow throat. "Now cut me here," he roared, sweeping the sharp of his hand across his windpipe, "and then fling my body overboard, for I cannot go on!"

"It should be some comfort to you," exclaimed the doctor, with a sarcastic curl of lip, "to discover that you are capable of expressing your alarm in so loud a voice. Your throat is very much better, and you are to be congratulated. Men of your bulk, whose skins take their complexion from the liver, usually suffer at sea. I have no remedy to prescribe but patience, which is worth exercising, because the dose you have been compelled to swallow has proved of signal service to the affection which, so you informed me, induced you to undertake this voyage."

Thus saying, he wheeled on his heel, rushed to the door down the sharp and sudden declivity of the deck, and disappeared.

"He is a brute of the field. He is an animal whose natural food is thistles and nettles," groaned Garcia, falling back on his pillow.

"He is certainly right in saying your voice has improved," said Mrs. Garcia.

"To hell with him and his opinions!" bawled the Chevalier, in a voice that filled the cabin with the roar of the sea. "I wish I may die, if I do not make the captain of this ship feel very sorry that his medical officer cannot distinguish between a first-class passenger of world-wide fame and a cheap and nasty emigrant, to whom he cannot be more rude than he is to me."

It is difficult to understand how a person so collected, prudent, and practical as Mrs. Garcia could have accepted the hand of a man so irritable, nervous, and emotional as the Chevalier. In truth, most of the troubles of the married life come through the sexes' ignorance of each

other's nature. "The man's desire," says the poet Coleridge, "is for the woman; but the woman's desire is rarely other than for the desire of the man." This, I think, is profoundly true where there is no interpolation of desire for fortune or for social position. Garcia had not married for love, neither had Mrs. Garcia in either of her experiences of husbands. But the Chevalier and his wife would have found themselves less restive, love or no love, had each brought to the altar a knowledge of the other's nature, even in the liberal and generic sense of the word, which might comprise qualities that neither possessed. To Mrs. Garcia the Chevalier was a musical genius, which was really but a very little part, and that not a very material part, of the whole man. To Garcia, Mrs. Redway had been a woman to like for her plain good breeding, her excellent taste in music, and her income; things which coloured but very superficially the head and heart which were to make Garcia easy or uncomfortable.

At the expiration of three weeks, however, from the date of sailing, Garcia was sufficiently recovered to appear on deck, and he rose through the companion hatch, habited in a gorgeous dressing-gown, a splendid smoking-cap, and a pair of richly embroidered slippers. The day was hot, with a fine cerulean sky that floated like a silver mist over the ship's many mast-heads, and the almost breathless sea ran in long-drawn tender undulations of pale silver grey, in which the light of the sun lay slowly waving, as though some vast cataract of mercury was pouring from surface to bottom. The awnings were spread; the ship's speed made a pleasant wind. Many ladies and gentlemen walked or sat in the shadow, and gowns fluttered and feathers rippled.

The Chevalier, attended by his wife, seated himself with reluctance and the effort of a man who is determined that everybody shall know he has suffered. His face,

somewhat attenuated by prolonged nausea, was charged with an expression of pity for himself, and so strange did he look in his sumptuous attire, that he might have passed for something from the heart of China, or an object who, when at home in some dim hall in Hindustan, Persia, or provinces contiguous to the Holy Land, would sit, a high priest, with worshippers on bended knees at his embroidered slippers.

His wife adjusted a pillow for his head, and the passengers stared at him. He was accustomed to be stared at. He would have felt mortified if he had not been stared at. He invariably made it a rule never to seem to know that people's eyes were fastened upon him, for he accepted the general gaze as homage to prodigious talent and a reputation that extended to the uttermost ends of the globe, and never imagined for a moment that the cause of his being looked at, as he now was on board the *Great Britain*, was not to be sought in his celebrity as a fiddler, a pianoforte player, a vocalist, and a band conductor, but in his clothes, face, and bearing. Thus do men err in their assessment of human judgment, and value themselves upon their importance, when, if the reason for that valuation were scrutinized, it would often be found humiliating with contempt and soiling with disgust.

Mrs. Garcia had not made friends whilst on board ship. She might have found an excuse for this in her husband's calls upon her time. But the truth is, she was not a friend-making person. She took her meals with punctuality in the saloon, and sat cold and abstracted at table, indifferent to the topics which interested others and listening only when something was said which she would have been pleased to contradict but for the reserve of a naturally frigid nature. If her fellow-passengers had felt any curiosity at all about her husband it was not because they understood that he was going out to fill a

theatrical engagement in Australia, but because they saw nothing of him, and wondered that any man, deserving of the name of man, should be so continuously ill when delicate females who had been at death's-door were walking about, eating heartily, enjoying the sights of the sea on deck, or killing time in harmless diversions below.

When at last Garcia appeared in his dressing-gown and slippers, the passengers, as we have seen, stared; but Mrs. Garcia had made no acquaintances, and nobody but the doctor troubled the couple as they sat side by side, much as Mr. Redway and Mrs. Ramsay had sat side by side, though the condition of mind in each couple differed exceedingly.

"How do you find your voice now that you are on deck, sir?" inquired the doctor.

The Chevalier, who no longer thirsted to ruin this man because he had been candid with him, answered in a key of lamentation—

"I can speak, for which I ought to be very thankful, as I am able to say that Dante's deepest dream of torment is the merest persiflage of a man that never made a voyage, compared with the unutterable agonies inflicted by a rolling ship."

"I should say," said the doctor, smiling at Mrs. Garcia, "you are so far recovered that, with a little effort, you would sing a difficult song with all your old power."

"Do not fear," said the Chevalier, nodding his head at him. "I shall not be tempted to try;" and he caught the people to right and to left in the tail of his eye without seeming to know whether they were watching him or not.

"You are quite rid of your sickness now, anyway," said the doctor; "and Mrs. Garcia is to be congratulated."

He made the couple a small ironical bow, and walked away.

"I do not like that man," said the Chevalier. "I should say, if the question was asked me in confidence, that he drinks. I have been told by travellers that most ship's surgeons are habitual drunkards. Their chemist's shops are little dark cabins in which they keep medicine in bottles which are often filled with spirits, and these they consume slyly. I think it is a matter that ought to be shown up in the medical journals. The ship-owners, who are notoriously mean, find any doctor good enough who is cheap enough, and it's frightful to consider that in a voyage of two months, or perhaps in four or five months, you may be at the mercy of a man whose imaginations are those of the madness of alcoholism, and who, in a sort of fit, may declare it necessary, in order to save your life, to cut off your leg, though it may be nothing but a little ulcer which a bread poultice might heal."

He spoke with his characteristic emphasis, for this was a man who had an opinion upon everything, and always delivered himself with great energy, much pounding of the air with his fist, and punctuation of his meaning by slaps on the thigh like the blow on a big drum in pauses of orchestral passages.

Mrs. Garcia hissed out "Hush! You'll be overheard. Doctors are dangerous people to meddle with, and he's just the sort of man to bring an action for libel against you."

The Chevalier's mustache enlarged with the mocking grin that widened his mouth, and then conceiving that the people had exhausted their critical inspection of him as a great man, he began in a sort of furtive way to gaze about him.

"A rather common lot on the whole," he muttered.

"Your British colonials have very little breeding. Figure the dignity of the old Spaniards who enlarged their empire in South America. You will not find many Pizarros amongst the forgers and sheep-stealers who founded your over-sea dominions."

"I wish you would not speak so loud," said Mrs. Garcia, looking around her with an expression of caution and anxiety.

"The English are a stubborn people, but very coarse in structure," continued the Chevalier, whose mood was growing splenetic through a misgiving, reluctantly growing, that he had been stared at rather for his dressing-gown than for his reputation. "You cannot conceive your emigrant a gentleman in the sense that the Portuguese and the Spaniards were gentlemen."

"I always thought you regarded the English aristocracy as the finest gentlemen in the world," said Mrs. Garcia.

"Thank you," answered the Chevalier. "Do the British aristocracy emigrate? They'll wait upon you."

"It's not an interesting subject," said Mrs. Garcia, petulantly. "Since I am here, I want to enjoy the voyage. I have had my troubles, and I think it would do me good if my mind could be at rest for a little. What beautiful colours run in that sea! It is like the shootings of light in silk. I do not understand this ship. She must surely be water-tight, yet they always seem to be pumping water out of her."

"What do you mean?" said the Chevalier.

"I have looked over and seen a hole in the side out of which a column of water is constantly spouting."

"Show it me," said the Chevalier.

He rose quickly, and went to the ship's side with his wife. He submitted a picturesque study as he overhung the rail—a square multi-coloured surface, from the glossy

curls of his black back hair down to midway the calves of his legs.

"There! Do you see it?" exclaimed Mrs. Garcia.

The Chevalier saw a hawser-thick fountain of water pulsing, like arterial blood when liberated, from a hole in the ship's side.

"*Dio mio!*" he ejaculated. "How long has this been going on?" He thrust his smoking-capped head over as far as he durst. "It is certainly a hole in the ship's side. Look, my God, how close the hole comes to the water when she rolls! Is this known? Is the ship half full of water that is being secretly pumped out so that the passengers shall not be alarmed?"

He brought his head up with a shock of tassel, and glared about him for any signs of a pump in action.

"I wonder if this has been noticed by other people," said Mrs. Garcia, who, when visited by any thought of sea-peril, could think only of the ocean as an arena for the exhibition of human torsos in life-belts.

The Chevalier looked over the side again. The pumping of the flood of water was unmistakable. It was what might be termed an ejaculatory spout, and distinctly implied an invisible pump whose action was spasmodic and not continuous, as is the case with village and other pumps with which the Chevalier was acquainted. He rounded again in a flood of braided splendour, and his gold tassel swang with him just as the third officer of the ship happened to pass.

"I beg pardon," exclaimed the Chevalier, "but are we leaking? Is the ship half full of water? She looks very deep, considering her length. What might this mean?" He bent over the side and pointed.

The third mate, a gentleman in badge and buttons, with a face so spotted with grog-blossoms that in colour

and garniture it suggested nothing so much as a sailor's currant-dumpling, stepped to the rail and looked.

"What's the matter with that, sir?" said he.

"Judge for yourself," said the Chevalier. "What is meant when water is pumped out of a ship's side?"

The third mate looked as if he thought he was being made a fool of, and hung in the wind as though debating whether he should move on. There was something Dutch in the shape of his head and in the stolidity of his expression of face.

"This ship was ashore for a whole winter, I was told," said the Chevalier, talking with an impassioned vigour that attracted the attention of some people hard by. "I represented to the agent in London that she might have a secret hole in her. He pooh-poohed. I should like to know what is the meaning of that."

He leaned over, and pointed with dramatic energy to the spout of water.

"It's a question for the engineers," answered the third mate, sullenly, still under the impression that he was being made a fool of by the foreign-looking brigand in a dressing-gown. "I've served in sail all my life, and don't pretend to answer questions about the engine-room."

And if this would be a lifelike answer in the mouth of a third mate of a steamship to-day, how much more lifelike was it in the mouth of an officer in a steamship of those times! The propeller was then new; the *Great Britain* had been originally intended for a paddle-wheel steamer but her builder, Mr. Patterson, of Bristol, had defied prejudice and prediction by bold adoption of the screw as a means of propulsion. Captains and mates in the sixties could reasonably plead ignorance of marine machinery.

"But that is no satisfaction to me," said the Chevalier. "There is a hole in the ship's side, and they

are pumping water through it. Is the captain aware of this? Is it done by his orders? If so, then water is coming in, otherwise it would not be necessary to pump it out."

The third officer beckoned to a young man in a suit of blue clothes, delicately veined with oil stains. He came from the fellow he was talking to, and the third mate said—

"This gentleman thinks that the ship's making water and sinking, because he sees water spouting out of her side. Will you explain, Mr. Brounger?"

The young engineer hung his pale somewhat emaciated face over the side, and then looking at the Chevalier, said with a smile—

"That's the main discharge for liberating the sea-water that's been used for condensing."

"Oh!" said the Chevalier. "Not sea-water in the ship's bottom then?"

"No, sir."

"And there's no danger in it?"

"There would be danger without it."

"But look, my friend!" exclaimed the Chevalier, heedless of the presence of several people, who grinned as they watched him declaiming in his strong theatrical way. "You admit there is a hole in the ship's side?"

"Yes, sir."

"And that when the ship rolls she submerges that hole?"

"Yes, at times."

"And do you mean to tell me," cried the Chevalier, nodding at him, and extending his arms in the dumb-show of appeal, "that, when that hole is rolled under, water does not enter the ship?"

"Of course it doesn't enter the ship," answered the young engineer, beginning to look a little scornfully at the

Chevalier. "How can it enter the ship when it is prevented from doing so?"

"Ah, but you should have said that at first. If you tell me that you make a leak only to prevent it from acting, then I understand what you say without understanding what you mean."

"The gentleman has made it clear," said Mrs. Garcia. "The water springs from the engine apparatus. It is enough for us to know that it is not a source of danger to the ship," and she bowed, that the engineer might know he was at liberty to return to his friend.

"Well," said the Chevalier, as he seated himself afresh, "a hole is a hole, and water speedily fills and sinks. I do not say it is not quite right, but this idea of sending a ship to sea with a hole in her side is very primitive, and I expect will end in disaster. But I do not suppose that anything will be done until public attention is directed to the matter by the sudden disappearance of a ship full of people."

Garcia dined that evening for the first time in the saloon. He wore dress clothes; his eyes sparkled like the diamonds on his breast and on his fingers. Mrs. Garcia was prudently attired in a handsome black silk dress trimmed with Brussel's lace, and her cap was in excellent correspondence with her cast of face. The Chevalier was attracted by this marine scene of light and eating. He would, when warm with wine and candid in temper, represent himself with an air of pride as the possessor of gipsy blood; in reality the source of his orgin was to be traced to the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea. The Orientalism of his spirit found something to delight it in the scene of glowing lamps, mirrors warm with the colours of reflection, tables sumptuously furnished with glittering silver and glass, with flowers and fruit. Many of the tables were filled by well-dressed people, but this time

the *Great Britain* was not going out with the full number of passengers she had been constructed to accommodate, and several cabins aft, and sleeping compartments in the steerage and 'tweendecks, were unlet.

Garcia was gratified by the observation he attracted. He murmured to his wife—

"They are beginning to find out who I am."

A lady opposite stared very hard, and soon after the fish was removed, she bowed and said—

"I had the pleasure of hearing you a year ago sing at St. James' Hall."

"Yes, madam," he answered, returning her bow with a prostrating inclination of his head, "and I am much pleased to think that you remember me."

"No one who has heard you could ever forget you," said the lady.

"Such praise, madam," replied the Chevalier, "renders even the motion of the sea endurable."

"He has suffered terribly," said Mrs. Garcia.

"You're going out to give entertainments, aren't you?" asked a colonial, who sat next to the lady whom Garcia was addressing.

This boisterous question brought the Chevalier's eyebrows together. It was clear to him that the colonial was one of those men who, because actors and singers entertain for money in public, conceive that liberties may be taken with them in private.

"I do not know," answered Garcia, haughtily, "whether that is so much your business as it is mine."

The chief-officer of the ship, who occupied the head of that table, fell a-laughing.

"Well," said the colonial, still boisterously, "if I'm to make one of the crowds you expect will hear you, I guess the business is as much mine as yours."

"What is this?" said the Chevalier, passionately,

[illegible] people of yours."

[illegible]

"[illegible]."

"[illegible] A very charming, delight[illegible]," exclaimed Garcia.

"[illegible] a warm admiration [illegible] with an insipid glance at the la[illegible]

[illegible]

"[illegible] her, Mary," said the Ch[illegible] gifted woman in voice, innate per[illegible] in face and in figure, I [illegible] it has been my happiness [illegible] with many fine women."

"[illegible] sings divinely," said the lady op[illegible] in a pleasant friendly mann[illegible]

"What has become of her?" inquired the Chev[illegible]

"[illegible] when I was in Paris about two year[illegible] the lady. "I understood that her intenti[illegible] her husband, where she has prop[illegible]

"I [illegible] still in Australia," said Garcia, "w[illegible] madam, hav[illegible]

evening at sea. It was strange that Garcia, who could taste colour and beauty in melody, had no eye for colour and beauty in the scenery of the land or in the glories of the deep. Were there no scales of tones and harmonies of hues and unheard music sweeter and more solemn in appeal to the intellect than the voice of the cathedral organ, that interprets to the passions the genius of Beethoven, or Gounod, or Mendelssohn, in this calm picture of a steamship floating along the dark blue water, in the lights upon the sea and in the sea, in the purple shadow in the east, with its heavenly decoration of evening star, in the wan rills of beaded bubbles trimming the satin smoothness of the wake, in the meteors of the invisible furnace glittering in the smoke that streamed away into the desolation of the recess, in the shadowy shapes of human beings fluttering over the faint pearl of the decks, and in the interpenetrating sounds of the mysterious caverned giant of steam, the gush of its life-blood pulsing at the side, the ceaseless sobbing of broken waters under the bows, the soft voices of women and maidens, the tones of men in animated talk, but taking a muffled note from the universal enfolding oppression of peace as high as the stars in the heavens, and as low as the stars in the sea?

"I must not risk my throat," said the Chevalier, after he had been pacing to and fro with his wife on his arm for half an hour. "But my voice is certainly stronger and my nausea is gone. I like that lady who knows Mrs. Ramsay. We will go downstairs and join her."

CHAPTER XXV

THE PASSENGERS OF THE *ROWENA*

It was just one week, dating from the close of the incidents related in the last chapter, about nine o'clock in the evening, a fine quiet night, with a clear spangled dusk sweeping the circle of the horizon, and a full moon of delicate silver-green filling the wide atmosphere of the central heavens with a glory as delicate and dream-like as the virginal splendour of the June leaf of the creeper, which in October burns in scarlet fire.

The steamer was moving through the water at the pace of some eleven knots. Nothing at the hour of nine was in sight. The eye sought in vain for a flaw in the continuity of mystic girdle that was ruled against the dusk in a dim gleam that made you think of ice. Nearly all the passengers were on deck. Among the absent was Mrs. Garcia, who had not appeared at the dinner-table that evening in consequence of an attack of neuralgia in the head. She had been lying down throughout the afternoon, and after dinner, when the Chevalier peeped in to see how she was, she was in bed trying to find relief in sleep.

Garcia was very much better. He had regained his voice almost to the degree of its normal strength. His appetite was good. He slept well. His spirits had risen. Sea-sickness was a thing of the past with him; he was no longer alarmed by the spasms of ejected water at the

ship's side. This evening he was smoking a cigar, and walking the deck with a gentleman who, like the lady at the table, had heard him sing in London, with whom he had struck up an acquaintance, liking him, as he had told Mrs. Garcia, for the excellent taste he exhibited in his love for music, and for his merits as a musical critic, in which he pre-eminently distinguished himself as an admirer of Garcia's art in the management of his own and in the voices of the people he instructed, when they happened to have voices susceptible of management.

Suddenly the hum of talk along the decks was threaded by a lonely cry from the forecastle-head.

"A white light three points on the port bow!"

Every eye that was turned in that direction saw it. It floated like the spark of a lighthouse or a lightship upon the ice-tinctured rim of the sea. The approaching light of a ship, was it? A beacon of fire upon some headland? The captain knew better than *that*. There was no land within a hundred leagues in that part of the sea in which the *Great Britain* was then steaming. The chief officer was in charge of the bridge, the captain (whose name in these pages I will call Hazard) stood alongside of him, and he pointed a binocular glass at the distant spark, whilst the mate levelled a telescope at it.

"It's a ship on fire, I believe," said the captain.

"I'm sure of it, sir," answered the mate. "I can make out a red tongue working into black smoke."

"Yes," said the captain. "I see the smoke. It puts the stars out." And advancing his head, he directed the quartermaster, who was conning the wheel, to shift the helm so as to bring the light to bear one point upon the port bow.

The awnings were furled, the moon showered in rain of pearls upon the white decks, which glistened like satin, and looked like a harp with its regular lines of black caulked

seams. The shadows of the people moved in ebony at their sides. The moon sparkled in diamonds on the skylights and the brass decorations, and made hoary the long, black column of smoke that travelled with the moving funnel, and arched over in a pinion of sooty vapour when a hundred feet high, floating slowly aft.

"The light has disappeared," said the Chevalier, directing his eyes from a wreath of cigar-smoke to the place where he had seen the spark.

"No," answered his companion; "it's almost directly ahead, and it's growing bigger."

"*Dio mio!*" cried the Chevalier. "Can it be a ship on fire?" And he stepped to the rail with his companion, and they both looked with their heads hanging over.

Many others were likewise looking with their heads projected beyond the rail. Ejaculations passed from mouth to mouth. These utterances of emotions scarcely broke the hush of suspense, expectation, and that visiting of dismay which inevitably attends the dreadful spectacle of fire at sea; for a ship on fire every one knew that spark, which had now grown into flames, to be.

The passage of the *Great Britain* through the water was comparatively rapid. When first beheld, the small red glow might have been some sixteen miles distant. In half an hour the steamer had measured nearly six miles of the width between her and the remote light, and in half an hour, therefore, the spark had been enlarged into the picture of a full-rigged ship in flames, reddening sea and heavens for miles and miles in pulsations of hot crimson, which waned and waxed in fierceness as the flames leapt and sank and soared again, in serpentine tongues that clove the pall of smoke into a floating volcano of thunder-making javelins of fire, of lava-like explosions of fragments of incandescent cargo, of crawling and quivering

lines of flame in shroud and backstay, with her own crimson shape floating in fluctuations of furnace dyes.

Against the midnight mass of blackness that hung in a canopy of soot-thick smoke over her, and striking a brightness that was as the lightning of the sun upon the steel-white sea that compassed her about by the space of twenty times her own length, grew that fated ship as the *Great Britain* slowly approached her with engines languidly moving, till they were silenced by the engine-room bell, echoed at the instant of its clanging by a man on the forecastle singing out in a strong, deep voice—

"A boat just off the port bow!"

The cry of a man, the sight of the boat—black as a beetle on moonlit gravel, and like it with her spreading fibres of oar—flung the full human meaning of it into what else had been merely a magnificent, an enormous, a heaven-eclipsing vision of conflagration, without the pathos of mortal suffering to interpret, without the agony of the direst of men's peril to inflame the blood, the heart, the brain with fever to succour, the fever that grows into madness in the noble and the brave as time is lost, as hope sinks.

"Look out for the end of this line!"

A line was hurled in fakes and caught by a shadow in the bows of the boat, and two curved lines of gunwale, with a score of ashen faces glimmering between, floated under a ladder that had been dropped through the steamer's gangway. The strong deep voice on the steamship's forcastle-head again broke in—

"Three boats away down on the port bow!"

The light made by the burning ship was mixed with the light of the moon, and the combined irradiation flooded the sea to its verge. Faces on the steamer's decks could be distinguished, nay, even their expressions perused, without help of lantern, candle, or cabin lamp.

"Can you manage to come alongside?" bawled Captain Hazard, on the bridge, through his funnelled fists, to a string of three boats which lay in a black line upon the sea in the scarlet reflection of the burning ship, like three gigantic sausages adrift.

"Ay, ay!" was returned faintly, and you saw the oars in all three boats working like the legs of a spider weaving his web.

Meanwhile, from the boat under the gangway, people were coming over the steamer's side. Eighteen or twenty, mostly sailors, costumed as Jack Muck then went, hairy, wild-eyed, grim with unshorn cheek, flat in breech and taut in hip, some with naked feet, some in half Wellington boots, all coloured alike by that strange mingling of lustre that made even common sailors shapes of beauty and romance; and with these men there were four women, one secreting a bundle of baby under her shawl.

The passengers of the *Great Britain* ranged so as to form two lanes, one leading aft, one leading forward; and in the thick of one of the hedges of these lanes was the Chevalier Albert Garcia, staring with black eyes starred with the radiance of the burning ship, a man profoundly moved, deeply disordered and confounded in imagination, an artist in soul, with every nerve strung in him to the intensity of the catgut from which his cunning could wring sweet sounds; every nerve in him, I say, so tight-strung that the passage of the wind of his thought through this intellectual Æolian harp fetched indescribable groans, inaudible ejaculations, unheard gasps and sobs from the spirit within him.

The mate, acting by orders of the captain, who remained on the bridge to watch the three boats, stepped through one of the human lanes to receive the visitors from the burning hell yonder. He picked out his man in an instant,

and said to a fellow in blue cloth and a cap with a naval peak—

"Yes, sir—I am—I was third mate of that ship."

"What ship is she?"

"The *Rowena*, from Sydney to London—fifty-four days out when we caught fire."

"How long have you been adrift?"

"Since noon yesterday."

"Who's your captain?"

"Captain Edward Jones, sir."

"Everybody saved, do you think?"

"Everybody. We made sure of that. The rest are in three boats, towing each other. They should be close by."

"They are fast nearing us," said the mate of the *Great Britain*. "Wool, I reckon, by the smoke?"

"Ay; and has been smouldering a fortnight past."

In the three boats the people were rowing with might and main. Hell was abaft and salvation before; and, like regenerated fiends heavenward-bound, the rowers plied their pinions of blades with a will. They came alongside and lay in a tier, now four feet deep, the people stepping from one boat into another, and so coming to the gangway ladder and ascending. Thirty souls had been in the long-boat, and an average of twenty apiece in the other boats, so that about four score and ten human beings came from that flaming ship to the *Great Britain*.

The captain, who had come down from the bridge, told the mate, the doctor, and the head steward to range the people in social strata; and accordingly the sailors of the *Rowena* went forward into the forecastle, the third-class passengers, of whom she had but eight, with two children and a baby, were conducted into the quarters of the steerage passengers of the steamship, and the saloon people of the *Rowena*, of whom there were fourteen all

told, were led by the doctor into the sumptuous, large, glittering cabin of the *Great Britain*.

The light was strong, as I have said. Faces could be seen, expressions interpreted. The second first-class people moved in slow procession to the companion-way, along the white planks of the lane, of which the bulges were the staring and gaping passengers of the steamer. Five ladies were among these second folk. Each woman had her husband, and one walked beside her daughter, and one held a child by the hand.

An exclamation burst from the lips of the Chevalier Albert Garcia. It was so violent, it was accompanied by so extravagant a movement of body, that much commotion was caused in his immediate neighbourhood, and a hoarse voice called out—

"Good God, is the singer dying?"

"*Dio mio!*" exclaimed the Chevalier, swaying on his legs like a man struck heavily on the head.

Two of the rescued people had passed. Garcia's black eyes had sought each of those two faces, instantly searched them with lightning velocity, knew them with perception coexistent with the glance. One was his friend Mr. Redway; one was his friend Mrs. Ramsay.

The musician stood as one paralyzed. He was not one of those men who, to gratify the fatuity of desire, are willing to consider their senses have deceived them. Neither was he a believer in ghosts. Had Mrs. Ramsay passed unaccompanied by Mr. Redway in that melancholy procession the Chevalier would, indeed, have been profoundly surprised and excited by so extraordinary a rencounter, but that was all; his emotions would have been as the upheaval of brine by shock of submarine earthquake—a few minutes of hissing white water, and [illegible] a flattening out into the familiar face of the

But Mr. Redway! There he was; and yet he was a dead man buried in a grave at Finisterre! Mr. Redway! There he was, at the side of Mrs. Ramsay, in the act of disappearing down the companion-hatch—a dead man frightfully alive, no horrible spectre, the hideous offspring of Garcia's perturbed vision, beholding objects in the brain-crazing conflict of leaping flames hard by, and pouring moonshine high up, but a substantial, corporeal thing with scissors-trimmed beard and mustache, wearing a striking resemblance to the portraits of King Charles I., clad in a suit of grey, and crowned by a white wideawake.

Mr. Redway!

The Chevalier, holding his breath, nearly choked; a torrent of terrible thought drenched his soul, and the unfortunate man's reason nearly foundered in the flood. Because he did not need to stand like a gaping creature awaiting impulse; he saw and understood the whole machinery of calamitous fate in that revelation of rescued man in a white wideawake. All came to him like a blow on the face. He was that man's wife's husband! God in heaven! That dead, most horribly alive, man's wife's husband! What would Mrs. Garcia think? But, *Dio mio!* she was not Mrs. Garcia; she was Mrs. Redway. Through the vehemence of the gesture with which he struck his brow he knocked the hat off the head of a man who stood at his elbow, and, without delivering a syllable of apology, fled to the aftermost part of the great ship, and sat upon a grating, with his arms tightly folded, to think.

By the time he had done thinking, the rescued people had got below, the human lanes had broken up, the boats of the burning ship had been sent adrift, the engine-room bell had set the huge propeller of the vessel a-churning, the ship in crackling flames was abeam, darting the lightning of exploding missiles into the raven-shadow above

her. She looked like a basket formed of red-hot reeds. Showers of glowing furniture, blocks, fragments of canvas, lengths of rope, yards, ties, chain-halliards, filled the ruddy surface of the sea with the hissing of a thousand enraged serpents. The noise of broken waters was under the bows of the *Great Britain*. The burning ship rapidly veered astern. On the bridge stood Captain Hazard and the master of the *Rowena*, in conversation. Many looked over the rail at the ship on fire. Little knots of people sauntered here and there. The moon shone brightly, and as the ship in flames diminished into a golden ball, the full beauty of the radiant queen of night, and the holy calm dwelling in those countless eyes of stars, sank through and through one, as the sweetness of fruit refreshes the marrow after famine and thirst at sea, as the soothing properties of the poppy infuse the balm of the babe's sleep into the fevered brain of the man.

What was the unfortunate and distracted Chevalier to do? We must scrupulously shadow him, for there can be no other way of finding out what he did do. He walked to the large and highly ornamental companion-hatch, and descended a few of the wide carpeted steps. Half his body was in shadow. He stooped and peered into the glowing interior, and commanded with his eye a table at which his friend Mrs. Ramsay was seated, whilst at her side stood the figure of his friend Mr. Redway. Garcia needed but a sugar-loaf hat and a carbine slung transversely across his back to have figured incomparably well as a bandit leaning over the edge of some mountain steep, and scrutinizing, under the sharp of his hand, a little band of opulent travellers passing on horseback along a dusty road far down.

He had not mistaken. His set teeth accentuated the conviction of his mind. Yonder was Alexander Beauclerk Redway, as sure as God's moon was in heaven, and yonder

was Mrs. Jerningham Ramsay, as sure as Garcia's eyes were in their sockets.

He rushed up, and again fled aft, and, with the air of a madman, paced that lonely part of the ship where three spare wheels on one gigantic spindle glimmered like the skeletons of targets which had been swept by a hurricane volley of musketry.

As he raged in footstep and in mind six bells were struck forward—eleven o'clock of the first watch—and as the metallic echo went dying out upon the sea, it was caught and twisted into a deep note: "All's well." It was time for the lights to be turned out fore and aft; but this was a night of commotion and of disorder in the familiar discipline of shipboard life. Below there was a hurrying to and fro; cabins were preparing for the accommodation of the rescued; food and drink were being supplied. The people had been exposed throughout the past night in open boats, and some of them were women and children. One man in the steerage was out of his mind, and a sailor was guarding him in a cabin, which the wretched lunatic would certainly not have enjoyed possession of alone but for his wits having left him; for who, even after shipwreck, would willingly share a cabin with a babbling madman, who swore that he was handcuffed to the Holy Ghost, and that he was being taken a prisoner to the heaven in which he didn't believe?

The Chevalier stepped along the deck. He halted at the skylight, and peered down into the saloon. He passed on until he got amongst some people. Looking with something frantic in his manner about him, he spied a steward or waiter, and called him. The man approached.

"Where is the doctor?" said Garcia.

"In the saloon, sir."

"Go and tell him I want him instantly," cried Garcia.

The man, whose nerves were attuned by the fire to the obligations it had produced, judged from the Chevalier's tones and gestures that something of a fearful nature had occurred demanding urgency as imperious and intense as though murder had been done, and sped to the saloon. Garcia followed, and halted at the companion-way to receive the doctor. He was kept waiting about five minutes—a stage of time as wide as the heavens for his passions, emotions, and sensations to riot in. The doctor came slowly up, a tall, long-faced, clean-shaven man of an intellectual cast of countenance, with an eye which constrained yours by intent regard.

"Oh, is it you that want me?" said he to the Chevalier. "What is the matter?"

"A frightful calamity has occurred," was Garcia's answer. "Come this way."

He grasped the doctor's arm, and led him right aft to hard by the three neglected spare wheels.

"You know," said the Chevalier, "that I am a married man?"

"Yes."

"Well," said the Chevalier, folding his arms and nodding, "I am the husband of a lady whose husband has come on board this ship from that vessel on fire."

"Pray explain."

"Look here," said the Chevalier, continuing to nod, "I married a lady last December. I believed she was a widow. She, too, believed she was a widow. We were told that her husband had been found dead in a life-belt that was washed ashore on the coast of Finisterre. Instead of which he is alive; he is below in the saloon; his name is Alexander Beauclerk Redway, and he seems to have a friend in a lady who was a friend of mine, Mrs. Ramsay." He paused, and blowing out the deep breath he had taken, exclaimed, "What's to be done?"

The doctor was a little astonished, but one of the habits of his life was the suppression of all manifestations of emotion. This is, I believe, the case with most medical men.

"I understand," he replied, after a few moments' interval of thought.

"Shall I see the captain?" cried Garcia.

"How can he help you? He has his ship to look after, and nearly a hundred more people than he bargained for."

"What am I to do?" groaned Garcia. "The news may kill my wife. *Dio mio!* She is not my wife."

"Are you sure you haven't mistaken the man?"

"He is the image of Charles I.," answered Garcia, in the key of a man who swears in wrath.

"You had better wait until the morning, then break the news to your wife—to Mrs.——" The doctor stuttered. "I mean, if the rescued parties are brought into this to-night it may kill them, if it doesn't kill your wife—I mean Mrs.——" Again he stuttered. "They have suffered a term of great exposure, and as they call themselves Mr. and Mrs. Beauclerk——"

"What—what!" yelled Garcia. Then heavily smacking his brow, he cried, "It all comes to me! This is the Beauclerk who was said to have been picked up from a sailing-ship and married in Australia. His second name is Beauclerk. His real name is Redway. Married, do you say, to Mrs. Ramsay? *Dio mio!* His life has been preserved, and he must have lost his brains."

By the light of the moon the doctor perceived that the dramatic figure standing up in front of him was very nearly in a fit.

He said kindly, "Look here, sir; it is past eleven o'clock, and too late for anything to be done to-night. If

you are correct in your surmises, the complication is enormous, and possibly unprecedented, and that is why you should go to your cabin and calm yourself in your bed; and I am quite sure your good sense will come to your rescue, and advise you for the best. It is a thing that nobody can deal with but you."

The Chevalier delivered a groan, and after a wild survey of the moon, and an equally profitless survey of the steel-grey sea, stretching into star-tipped shadow, where it blended with the atmosphere, he staggered to the wide yawn of the companion-way; then assuring himself that Mr. Redway and his companion had quitted the saloon, he sneaked into his own and his wife's cabin.

Mrs. Redway, as I am now reluctantly compelled to call her, was awake. The lamp in the berth burnt low; but for the disorder of that night it would have been out.

"I've been wondering where you were," said Mrs. Redway. "What's been going on?"

The Chevalier was debating whether to pull off his clothes, or to lie down dressed as he was. As a matter of fact he felt that, under the circumstances, he was not acting the part of an honourable man in sharing the cabin of the lady whom he had married without becoming her husband. But what was he to do? He stood, and would have remained motionless but for the swaying of his figure with the gentle heave of the deck, and stared at her, and she stared back at him over the edge of her bunk.

"I want to know," she said, "what was the matter in this ship; but I should like first to know what is the matter with you?"

"Oh!" he answered, laying a sparkling hand upon his waistcoat, "I'm upset. Fire is frightful at sea. People have come on board. I feel ill."

She sat erect in her bunk. Her head was better, but he did not think of enquiring whether it was or not.

"Ask the steward for a little brandy."

"No," he answered, with a passionate flourish of his hand.

"Why don't you undress and get into bed, and I will slip on my dressing-gown and tell one of the stewards to fetch the doctor?"

He eyed her in silence, but with so strange an expression, so grotesque a commingling of mask, wrought by infinitely varied facial reflection of spiritual contortions, that her wide-open slate-blue eyes brightened with fear, and she cried in a voice of such command as might have made you swear that conviction had been created in her by intuitive perception—

"I request, Albert, that you will tell me what is wrong, and what is the matter with you."

He was in that state of mind which may be compared with putty when soft, possessed of the capacity of being moulded just as you please, and when moulded and left, turning as hard as concrete. He had thought he had made up his mind to wait till the morning, but he was to be influenced by the cool though nervous eyes which were fastened upon him. As he was incapable of resolution, he was in the frame of temper to be subdued to another's desire, and speaking, so to say, under the influence of those slate-blue eyes, that calm, but determined face, he said—

"A most horrible thing has happened for you and for me."

She stiffened in her sitting posture. She knew her man, and divined in his manner what was coming.

"This evening," he went on, "we sighted a ship on fire. Her passengers and sailors were in boats. They were all taken on board this ship, amongst them are—whom do you think?" He projected his head at her, and his eyeballs glowed like red-hot cinders as he began to nod.

"Now tell me!" she exclaimed, in a voice of sickness.

"As God is my witness," he cried, elevating his clenched fist to the upper deck, "your husband, Alexander Beauclerk Redway—and—*Dio mio!* Mrs. Jerningham Ramsay, who was the lady the newspapers declared Mr. Beauclerk married in Sydney, New South Wales."

She looked at him for a few moments, as one who stares straight out of a brain thick with rolling and disappearing clouds of imagination, on waking from nightmare. Then the sex of her, the inherent chastity of the woman of her, the modesty and the purity of her—gracious and sweetening aromas of the roses and lilies of true and good woman's nature—took full spiritual possession of their own, and she said, "You must leave my cabin."

He looked at her, and his throat swelled, and the fingers of his hands were opened and clasped by dreadful tension, almost convulsion of nerve. Thrice he essayed to speak, then succeeded in saying in a low, scarcely audible voice—

"You are right. I am very—very sorry."

He bowed low, and passed out into the saloon, and going to a sofa in the aftermost end, seated himself.

Mrs. Redway rose and dressed herself completely, as though it was eight o'clock in the morning, and the breakfast bell would be rung shortly. How am I to dissect this woman's mind, to analyze the throng of emotions which crowded her, even to the sense of suffocation, so that she would often grasp her throat, and often halt dead in her movements as though despair had blasted her, as though life to its uttermost sources had been frozen into the stagnation of death, paralyzing the mind and leaving nothing living but the eye aghast and fixed upon the shape that had come, but not at the bidding of her heart, the shape that, having come, refused to go?

[illegible] you who read this are a woman, what would you do [illegible] Redway's situation was yours? How would you

think? What would be the emotions and passions which would rise in you? It is not for me, as a man, to interpret the heart of a woman under such conditions as these I have submitted. I have asked many women, "How would you have thought, and what would you have done had you been Mrs. Redway?" and the invariable answer has been, "I don't know." Because who can foresee how one will act in any given situation of stress, of financial calamity, of social ruin? All that I am able to tell you is what Mrs. Redway did. What she thought, God alone knows.

Shortly after Garcia had left the deck, Captain Hazard sent for the doctor, who immediately repaired to the chart-room. Here was a lighted interior, lustrous with polished instruments of navigation, cosy with a large hair-seated locker, homely with a partially-draped bird-cage, in which a canary was sleeping, with its head under its wing. The captain desired reports about the condition of the rescued people. He wished for the latest news of the lunatic in the 'tween decks. He talked of Captain Edward Jones, and that fine full-rigged ship, the *Rowena*, which had gone to her account. Jones and he had been midshipmen together, he said, on board the grand old Blackwall liner *Bombay*. Jones, he feared, was a ruined man. The ship's wool had been smouldering for some days, and in spite of ceaseless efforts to keep the fire under, the flames broke out on a morning watch, and before the first dog-watch came round, every soul was afloat in the boats, and the ship a great burning body, irretrievably gone. Passengers and crew had lost everything belonging to them—everything but their lives, and this consideration was poor Jones' only consolation.

"He's not the only man in this ship, sir, that that fire has brought trouble to," said the doctor, and he related the story that Garcia had told him.

"Is he quite sure that the man is Mr. Redway?" said the captain, accepting the relation with the complacency of a man who was used to sudden squalls, and to black confrontments of sea peril, and who, when in command of sailing-ships, was never once taken by the lee.

"Cock-sure!" was the doctor's answer.

Half an hour later the captain had occasion to go below. He entered the saloon to pass through it to his cabin. The gloom of that large sea hall, with its rows of tables and sofas, its dull sheen of swinging trays, and metal lamps and mirrors, was scarcely invaded by the dimmed light of a central burner, and no one in the dusk was astir. The stewards had turned in; every cabin door was shut. You heard nothing but the creaking of bulkheads as the ship swayed, the stealthy, subdued seething of waters outside, the sounds of the steering-gear as the helmsman, high-perched moved a spoke. The captain caught sight of a figure seated at the extreme end of a sofa, with his head bowed over his folded arms. He stepped over to him.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Garcia," said he. "Can't you get any sleep in your berth, that you're seeking repose here?"

"I have no berth," answered Garcia, raising his head, without unfolding his arms.

"The doctor has told me your story. I am sorry to hear this trouble," said the captain. "It's happened to others. It'll happen to more who are perhaps not yet born. But you are sure of your man?"

"Oh, my God, yes!" groaned the Chevalier.

"Look here, sir; it'll be a poor look-out for you to sit here alone all night. I shall take what rest I want in the chart-room, and you are welcome to lie down in my cabin."

"You are very, very kind," said Garcia, in a broken voice, rising.

The captain led the way, and during the remainder of the night the unhappy vocalist and teacher of singing lay on a locker in the captain's cabin. Throughout the sleepless hours the man could think of nothing but how he was to act, how Mrs. Redway was to act, what Mr. Redway would do, whether it was possible that the doctor was right when he said that Mr. Redway had been spoken of as Mr. Beauclerk, and that he was the husband of the lady, Mrs. Ramsay, who was in his company. It was horrible to reflect that the story would be all over the ship before breakfast was served; and the ship was so infernally full of people, too. Possibly the wretchedness of the people who had been brought off the burning ship might in some measure neutralize the effect upon the minds of the other passengers, of the complicated story of two husbands at sea in possession of wives to whom they were illegally married. How could he, the Chevalier, appear at the breakfast-table? Where on earth was he to hide his head? A ship was not like a town: he could not secretly conceal himself in lodgings in the suburbs. He could not go to the railway-station and take a first-class ticket for anywhere, and stay there until he had formed some resolution or other. If he left the captain's cabin he must show his nose, and though the Chevalier often mistook the sensations he excited in others, he was too nervous and emotional to mistake derision, or contemptuous pity, or any other demonstration of human quality, when the cause was a direct appeal, as he miserably understood it would be in this case.

At about seven o'clock in the morning he decided to go on deck and ask the captain if he would permit him to breakfast in the chart-room, where he would be out of sight, and where he could receive news of the three below, so as to be able to form his judgment, and take the best step he could think of. He put on his soft wideawake,

but started at his reflection in the looking-glass. He hardly knew himself. His colour had deepened into orange. His cheeks were sunk as though he had been living on nothing but opium for a fortnight; his eyes were as lustreless as though cataracts had been formed over them, his ebony-black eyebrows were never more contracted, his mustachios drooped like broken feathers in a fowl's wing. He opened the door, and passed into the saloon with a heart that beat more tempestuously than ever his baton had been swept in the wildest throes of a Rossini overture.

The stewards or waiters were draping the tables for breakfast. Just as he stepped forth a large basket lined with tin, full of crockery, that had been placed by the hand of an idiot on the extreme edge of a noble sideboard that adorned the foremost end of the saloon, capsized with a lurch of the ship, and the smash was heart-subduing. The Chevalier leapt a foot from the deck, in the thick of a volley of oaths levelled by the head-steward—an immensely fat man, in a short camlet jacket—at the fool who was responsible for this ruin and clamour. A moment later, the door of a cabin past the broad flight of companion steps opened, and Mr. Redway came out.

CHAPTER XXVI

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

THE Chevalier's instant impulse was to turn and dart into the captain's cabin. But Mr. Redway had caught sight of him. He was mopping and mowing, in every conceivable manner, by gesture of head, by variety of posture, exhibition of face, expressing surprise, profound and extravagantly inspiriting. He was Redway with a vengeance! The Redway of Bayswater! The Redway of Mrs. Garcia's bed and board! Redway, but not, *Dio mio!* the torso of the life-belt!

The afflicted gentleman approached the rooted Chevalier. His head was dropped a little to one side, his right eye was somewhat closed, as in one who measures distance.

"Gracious goodness!" he cried, "can it be—but it is—the Chevalier Garcia! You—in this ship! Why, where are you going? What are you doing here?"

"I might ask you that question," replied Garcia, beginning to nod at him, and talking to and feeling towards him as though he was a shade.

"That's just it. I want to know why I *am* here!" said Mr. Redway, speaking rapidly, and with a singular manner that abruptly fixed the Chevalier's attention. "They've put me and a lady together in one cabin. Deuced unseemly, I think. I'm on very friendly terms with her, and the last man in the world to cause her

annoyance. As if rescued people were to be treated as creatures without feelings! I haven't had my clothes off all night. That makes two nights of clothes on. I feel as fluey as an old pocket. Where have you come from?"

"London!" answered Garcia, in a note like a voice from the tomb.

"Did you see anything of my wife before you left?" asked Mr. Redway.

"I did, indeed," answered Garcia, nodding continuously.

"How was she when you last saw her?"

"My God, do not mention it!"

"I suppose she is fearfully upset by the report of the sinking of the *Princess Royal?*" exclaimed Mr. Redway, with an eager strained face.

"*Dio mio!* these are questions for the doctor to answer. Steward!" he bellowed to the waiter nearest to him, "go and tell the doctor to come here at once—to come to the captain's cabin—and be quick. This way!" and, followed by Mr. Redway, Garcia entered the room occupied by the commander of the ship, muttering to himself, "Just as I thought; he is out of his mind."

"Why have you sent for the doctor? Are you ill?" asked Mr. Redway, looking, with a queer critical curiosity, around him, and then at Garcia, after the door was shut.

"Because he can discharge a certain delicate office," answered the Chevalier, who was trembling. "It is a doctor's profession to discharge delicate offices." And he thought to himself, in Spanish, in which language he was accustomed to reflect when agitated, "His eyes hold the dangerous light of the madman! What is to happen? Why is he not some buried remains in Finisterre?"

The handle of the door was turned, and Captain

Hazard entered. He started on finding his cabin occupied. He had probably overlooked, amid the heavy obligations of command at sea, the trifling circumstance of the band-conductor's existence.

"Oh!" cried Garcia, with the expression of an eased soul in his face, "I am glad you have come, sir. I have just sent for the doctor. This is Mr. Redway, who for many months past was supposed drowned in the *Princess Royal*, and buried out of a life-belt in the village of Finisterre."

"I understood that your wife gave your name and hers as Beauclerk, when we received you on board last night," said the captain, scrutinizing Mr. Redway's face with an eye keen enough to bore a hole through a black squall.

"Beauclerk!" answered Mr. Redway, haughtily. "I owe much to this ship and to you, sir, but I hope I have not been rescued merely to be converted into an object of ridicule. My name is Redway, and not Beauclerk, and I do not know what you mean by referring to my wife as though she was on board."

The captain turned his eyes upon Garcia, and stared at him. By a physiologist it might have been seen—but not just yet by Captain Hazard or the Chevalier Garcia—that the state of Mr. Redway's mind was this: his functions, standing up in a sort of quadrille, had changed sides. One lobe of his brain had apparently struck work; the other was active—healthily active for Mr. Redway—but behaving with criminal absurdity for Mr. Beauclerk. His mind, in short, was like one of those venerable maps of the world, which represent Great Britain shaped as a shoulder of mutton, lying without longitude in about eighty degrees of latitude north; and New Holland down in the south-east corner, seeking to elude the eye as a crescent moon disappearing in a cloud. It was, in short,

thus with the unfortunate Mr. Redway, and I will illustrate his mental phase by an incident which I will ask the reader, on my word of honour, to accept as an absolute fact.

An English lady, residing at St. Petersburg, was afflicted with an acute squint. Her face was otherwise charming, and she was a woman of great accomplishments and distinction in person and manner. A celebrated German oculist happened to be travelling in Russia. He visited St. Petersburg, and was waited upon by the husband of the lady. He consented to operate, but as he was departing in a week, it would be necessary for him, after the operation, to leave the case in the hands of another. The operation was performed; strictest injunctions were given that the lady should remain in a black room for one whole month, at the expiration of which the blinds were to be raised. For a whole month the lady sat in blackness, but the moment the light struck her eyes, they darted into the outer corners of their sockets, and instead of squinting internally, as before, she squinted externally.

Thus was it with Mr. Redway. The shock of the foundering of the steamer *Princess Royal* had caused his mind to squint internally; the terror of the fire on board the *Rowena* had wrought a change diametrically opposite, and his mind now squinted externally.

"Pray take a seat, Mr. Redway," said Captain Hazard. "Be seated, Mr. Garcia."

The doctor knocked and entered.

"I beg pardon, captain," said he. "I did not know that you were here. I was sent for to this cabin."

"By me," exclaimed the Chevalier, removing his eyes laboriously from Mr. Redway, who seemed to have subdued him into a fixed stare, as though he were under some unholy spell.

The captain, with a glance at Mr. Redway, shot a look at the doctor so full of significant meaning that each pupil of the orb of sight might have been a clearly defined note of interrogation. The doctor, apt in interpretation, said—

"Is this gentleman Mr. Redway or Mr. Beauclerk?"

"Are you referring to me?" said Mr. Redway, abandoning the amiable look with which he had been regarding an oil-painting of Mrs. Hazard extending her hands towards a little boy Hazard clothed in the suit of the naval sailor of that day.

"This is Mr. Redway," said the captain. "There can be no doubt of that."

"I should think there couldn't be," said Garcia.

"I cannot conceive why my identity is being discussed," observed Mr. Redway, with the hauteur of Mr. Beauclerk. "My friend Garcia knows who I am. What the deuce he is doing in this ship is the puzzle to me, though, to tell you the truth, captain, I'll be shot if I know what I'm doing here myself. It's that damned fire—forgive my strong language. The smoke of it seems to have got into my head; and, my God, what a smoke there was!"

"I see how it is," said the doctor, softly, to the captain.

"Will you question him, sir?"

Mr. Redway darted a glance of angry suspicion at the whisperer. The moral spectrum of the Chevalier's face, if analyzed, would have been found to contain dismay, fear, bewilderment, the sense of helplessness, and the hue of pity blended with a faint expression of wrath. The whole, combined, rendered his face a wonderful expression of emotion, fearfully picturesque with its broken feathers of mustachio and the blue layer of a twenty-four hours' growth of hair. He was shone upon by the fluctuating lights of the sea, which swarmed in prismatic rays upon

the thick glass scuttle of the large and comfortable cabin.

"I am interested in your story, Mr. Redway," said the captain, addressing him in such soothing notes as a humane man might employ who asks another, with a newly broken leg, if he suffers much. "You have undergone shipwreck."

"Worse," answered Mr. Redway. "You remember, Garcia, that the doctors talked me into taking a voyage for tuberculosis in the right lung."

"Yes, yes," murmured Garcia.

"I paid for a cabin in the *Princess Royal* of the Union Steam Ship Company," continued Mr. Redway, "bound to Cape Town, and she foundered suddenly in the middle of the night, and left me floating in a washstand, through which I rose with my head in the hole for the basin. After which——" He stopped and look vacantly at Garcia.

"How were you rescued?" asked Captain Hazard.

"That's just where the smoke comes in," answered Mr. Redway.

"Loss of memory through shock to the nervous system," whispered the doctor to the captain.

"Hasn't news of the wreck of the *Princess Royal* reached home, Garcia?" inquired Redway. "You take things damned coolly! Forgive me. My wife must be fretting her heart out. You scarcely tell me how she was when you last saw her, and you send for the doctor! And I'm puzzled to death to know what *you're* doing here."

"I'm going to Australia to give entertainments," answered the Chevalier, sternly. "You shall not ask me about your wife, by God!"

He clenched his fist, and thumped his leg.

"May I ask," said the doctor, in a cautious voice,

"if the lady you were put with last night is your wife?"

"My wife!" shouted Mr. Redway; and then, changing his face, he turned upon the Chevalier with a loud laugh, crying, "What do you think of that, Garcia! How would Mary like it?"

Garcia rolled his eyes up until the flowery parts were invisible.

"I complain of having been put with this lady," continued Mr. Redway, addressing the doctor with considerable warmth. "It was an outrage to her feelings. I have the honour of her acquaintance. We seem to have met in an open boat. I cannot push recollection of my forming the acquaintance of that lady beyond the open boat. She is a fine woman, with the delicacy and sensibility of the best of her sex, and if you, as doctor of this ship, are responsible for having placed us in one cabin, I must take this opportunity now of lodging my protest against what I will term your want of discrimination."

The doctor gave him a solemn bow. "I can be of no further use here," said he to Captain Hazard, who, in reply, shrugged his shoulders.

"May I say a few words to you outside, doctor?" said Garcia.

They stepped out. The waiters were still busy at the tables in the saloon.

"You know," said Garcia, who was again trembling, and who spoke with the rapidity of the agitated, the distracted foreigner, "that the lady who is in that cabin, there," he pointed with his fore-finger as though he suddenly levelled a pistol, "who was my wife, is in reality Mr. Redway's wife? We married in good faith. He ought to have washed ashore in the lifebelt,—in the lifebelt his wife gave him. He did not. Another man washed;

he was buried as Mr. Redway; and we married. Now, what am I to do?"

"Go and tell the truth. What else remains to be done?" was the doctor's answer.

A cabin door was opened at the aftermost end of the saloon, and the fully dressed figure of a lady, in hat, jacket, and serge gown, appeared. She was lustrous with bronzed hair about the brow. She was as white as a lily, and in that face of the passionless hue of the sweet and beautiful flower, her fine eyes shone out of their deep dye of liquid emotional light. She spoke to a waiter and vanished, closing the door.

"Good God!" cried the Chevalier, "it was Mrs. Ramsay!"

"Or Mrs. Beauclerk?" said the doctor.

The waiter the lady had spoken to appeared and said, "Mrs. Beauclerk wants to see the doctor, sir."

"Did she ask for me?" responded the doctor.

"She asked for the doctor."

The doctor went to Mrs. Ramsay's cabin, and Garcia to Mrs. Redway's.

Mrs. Ramsay stood with her hand upon the mahogany board that protected the side of an upper bunk. The undulation of the sea was gentle and regular. It communicated a grace of its own to the handsome figure of the lady with the bending motions it obliged her to adopt. She was extremely pale, and carried a worn and frightened look. Immediately, when the door was opened, she exclaimed with energy—

"You are this ship's doctor, I think?"

"I am," responded the doctor, bowing his head from his neck.

"Have you seen my husband?" she cried, with the passionate vehemence of a woman radically vulgar, but skilfully veneered.

"I have just left a gentlemen named Redway," answered the doctor.

"What do you mean?" she cried, levelling the fires of her dark brown eyes at him, a description which is not out of nature, because the light of the morning flowed in splendour through the porthole, and her eyes were quick with it, and with the flames of the passions of her soul.

"I am afraid," said the doctor, gravely, "that matters this morning are not precisely what they seemed to be when this ship received you on board last night."

"Oh, do explain!" she cried, letting go the bunk-board to clasp her hands, which she raised in a theatrical posture of prayer, whilst her voice was rich with the tremors which can through it.

"You came on board with a gentleman whom you represented as Mr. Beauclerk, and yourself as his wife," said the doctor.

"Yes! Of course. I am Mrs. Beauclerk! Mr. Beauclerk is my husband. We were married in Sydney at St. Philip's church. What do you mean?"

Her face was working almost hysterically with suspicion and terror.

"My duty is an unpleasant one," said the doctor. "I trust we may able to discuss this very melancholy subject calmly."

"Now tell me all at once, do, for God's sake!" Mrs. Ramsay burst out. "I'm certain you can't tell me more than I foreboded. Is he—is he——?"

"I am compelled to inform you that Mr. Redway is not in possession of his mind," said the doctor.

"Mr. Redway!" shrieked Mrs. Ramsay.

"Otherwise Mr. Beauclerk," exclaimed the doctor.

"You don't tell me," she gasped, "that Beauclerk is not my husband's name?"

"He has been recognized as Mr. Redway by an old

friend of his, a passenger in this ship who styles himself the Chevalier Garcia, and I am sorry to add—for matters are sufficiently complicated as they stand—that the Chevalier Garcia innocently married the wife of Mr. Redway, who is on board with him, both being convinced that Mr. Redway was drowned when the ship he sailed in, to benefit a lung affection, foundered off the coast of Finisterre."

She listened with a face that, as he proceeded, grew marble-hard. She reeled once, but helped herself by gripping the bunk-board. There was more in what the doctor had told her than her mind could promptly absorb. She stared at him fixedly with her lips parted, and her bosom heaving in swift respirations.

"His name is Redway, and not Beauclerk, then," she began to mutter. "Now I see things clearly. He is not an impostor—he is a madman. I have thought so for a long time past. Oh, God! what a situation to be placed in." Again she clasped her hands and upheld them in an attitude of abject entreaty. "I was a passenger bound to Sydney, my native city, in the ship *Crimson Banner!*" she broke out, delivering herself rapidly as though retardation of emotion by thought and the slow enunciation of thought, must result in the scream of hysteria. "He was received from a French yacht, and called himself Mr. Beauclerk, a cousin of the Duke of St Albans, and everybody believed it, and I—and I," she went on sobbingly, "I trusted him, and loved him, and gave him my hand, and we are man and wife before God. Oh, doctor, what did you just now tell me? That *his* wife is on board?"

The doctor, who was moved, made an affirmative gesture with his head.

"I know the Chevalier Garcia," she rattled on wildly. "I was a pupil of his. I told Mr. Beauclerk that I had

met him before somewhere—at the Chevalier Garcia's. His *wife* on board! Do you say that the Chevalier Garcia married Mr. Beauclerk's wife?"

"Mr. Redway's wife; Mr. Beauclerk and Mr. Redway are one."

Again she stared at him, rigid in face and form as a statue, but for the bending of her figure to the heave of the deck, and the panting of her bosom with the storm in her heart.

"All last night he was very strange," she began again, as though thinking aloud. "He could not rest. He was in and out of the cabin. I believed his mind had been unsettled by the fire, yet he was quiet in the boat. He talked to me and looked at me as if I were a new acquaintance of his, and said it was not right that he and I should have been put into one cabin. But how could I guess the truth from *this?* because all along I had had a misgiving that his intellect was not sound, and I believed that the shock of the fire coming as a second shipwreck in a few months, comparatively speaking, had deepened the trouble of his brain. We were coming home because I suspected something was wrong. I could not get to hear satisfactory news of him from England. My bankers received a letter from Coutts, where he said he banked in London, stating that there was only one Beauclerk on their books, and that they knew no person of the name of Alexander Beauclerk. He, it was, and not I, who proposed that we should go home, and I vow to God he has been consistently the man he declared himself to be down to last night, when he was strange—very strange," she said, closing her words in a whisper, and looking at the doctor with the face of a sleep-walker.

After a pause between them, she said in a voice that was sweet compared with the tension of the note in which she had been speaking—

"Will you ask the Chevalier Garcia to come and see me?"

"He has gone to break the news to Mrs. Redway," answered the doctor.

She turned swiftly towards the port-hole above the upper bed, leaned over the bunk-board with her face buried in her hands and broke into a piteous sobbing.

Meanwhile, the Chevalier Garcia, who continued to tremble exceedingly, knocked upon Mrs. Redway's door with knuckles whose chatter upon the wood was like the twittering of London sparrows at daybreak. He was requested by a cold voice that sounded feeble to enter. He did so, and found Mrs. Redway seated upon a trunk very still, very composed, very hard-set about the mouth, very cold in the large light eyes she fixed upon him, eyes whose hue was undimmed by tears or the trace of tears. It would be impossible to figure a greater contrast in human character than was submitted by the appearance, merely, of these two figures. One was calm even to rigidity in aspect, purely English and lady-like in the serenity that glazed her feelings as ice subdues the turbulence it forms upon: the other was the contortionist of the passions, a rabid face-maker, a windmill in gesticulation, an incarnate paroxysm, pre-eminently Garcia singing in some song of wild despair, attitudinizing in some part of melodramatic misery, Garcia off the stage, but on it too, despite his broken feathers of mustache, his unshorn cheeks, the imprint of a sleepless night upon his face, the dramatization of kaleidoscopic sensations by his rolling eyes and contracting and arching brows.

"What have you come to tell me?" she asked, in her steady voice.

He began to nod at her.

"It is shocking for me to have to tell it to you," he replied, extending his arms and looking up over her head

as though he was singing to a gallery in a theatre. "Your husband is out of his mind."

"What proofs have you for saying this?" she said, looking at him with an expression that was dangerously close to aversion.

Still nodding at her, the Chevalier replied—

"He does not know that he is married to Mrs. Ramsay. He does not remember anything after he was rescued by a French yacht. He remembers me, and he remembers you. So!"

He stamped his foot and clasped his arms upon his breast.

"How do you know this?"

"*Dio mio!*" he thundered. "I have just left him."

Then, bending his head and looking at her under his raven-black brows, he said in a deep voice—

"You do not seem to be affected."

"How *dare* you say so!" she cried, and set her teeth, showing them between her slightly parted lips.

"Are you going to turn upon me, madam?" said the singer, dropping his arms to his side into the helplessness of pump-handles.

She looked away without replying.

"Is this of my bringing about?" he exclaimed, thumping his shirt-front with his fist. "Am I a man to bring dishonour upon a lady to whom I gave a name that is known all over the world?"

"I have brought no charges against you," she answered, still keeping her eyes averted.

"Would you like to see him?" he asked with lofty irony.

"I shall see him in good time," she replied, rising and turning her back upon him whilst she seemed to be looking through the port-hole.

He shrugged his shoulders until the lobes of his ears lay upon them, and nodded at her figure.

"I think," she exclaimed, suddenly turning, "that under the circumstances, we had better remain apart—fixedly apart."

He made her a low bow and backed a pace to the door.

"I believe you are right; women usually advise wisely in situations of this sort. There was a time"—he stopped to swallow what might have proved a sigh. "There was no man," he continued, "that I respected more, no man for whom I had a feeling more affectionate and warm; but I declare to God that, precious as his life may be to you, it would have been better for you and for me than it now is, had he continued to be some remains buried in the little village of Finisterre."

He made her another bow and left the cabin.

As the Chevalier Garcia makes his bow to Mrs. Redway the curtain falls upon this comedy of the sea; and I, who have been watching the performance from the prompter's box, step round to the front in order to deliver the necessary epilogue.

It is difficult to decide which of the two ladies who take the leading parts in this story deserve most consideration. Mrs. Ramsay's case was peculiarly hard. She had married for position. Her ambition had soared to dreams as lofty as the perpetuation of the Stuart dynasty. She had hoped to repose in the bed in which a fugitive monarch—her husband's ancestor—had slept. Her slumbers had been thronged with visions of York Manor, portraits of famous people who figure in Pepys' and Clarendon, of hospitable boards under which royal and courtly knees have been crooked, of heirlooms of massy plate, and blue rooms, or grey rooms, haunted by a headless spectre of melancholy but stately deportment.

It is true that the poor lady had occasionally been visited by misgivings. But she never could have suspected; she never did conceive, even in her most pensive mood, that her husband's name was not Beauclerk, and that he was a married man. She thought of the Mowbrays and the Latimers of New South Wales. It was horrible to her to find herself being carried back to Australia instead of going to England. She easily understood that her own and the story of the others would find its way into the Melbourne press, and thence to the newspapers of Sydney. And this consideration made her affliction so enormous that her spirit was completely prostrated every time this prodigious burden of trouble rolled down upon her in her reveries.

Mrs. Redway's case was that of a chaste and passionless woman, outraged by an irretrievable error. She could find no consolation in the reflection that she and Garcia had married in the strictest good faith. On the contrary, the arrow that pierced deepest was her self-accusation of having married a second husband before her shapeless intuitive misgiving, that her first husband might not have perished in the wreck, had been melted out by the passage of time. Love, in the sense of passion, was impossible in such a woman. Mrs. Redway's theory of love could never extend beyond a friendship that must be tranquil, discreet, and consistent. Redway, as a friend, she would have held immeasurably preferable to Garcia. And now she had lost both men without valuing anything but her own feelings, without deploring any other feature of the posture of affairs on board the *Great Britain* than the disgraceful and unholy state into which she had been sunk by confounding a torso in a life-belt with a man in a washstand.

For some days Mr. Redway was not apprised of the presence of his wife aboard the ship. This reserve was

practised at the instance of the medical officer. The doctor then broke the news to the unfortunate man, and studied the impression it produced upon him with critical and professional curiosity. Mr. Redway expressed the utmost astonishment, and wanted to know why he had not been told before that his wife was in the ship. The doctor cautiously replied that Mrs. Redway would probably explain. Mr. Redway, on this, demanded to be taken to her. The doctor answered certainly, but Mrs. Redway must first be approached on the subject.

Mrs. Redway received the doctor lifelessly, and flatly informed him that she had not the slightest idea of ever living with or meeting Mr. Redway again. The doctor had but to scrutinize her face to understand that remonstrance must prove useless. No countenance could have worn a more inflexible expression. When Mr. Redway was informed of his wife's decision he fell into a very agony of amazement.

"What!" he exclaimed to the doctor. "Not meet me! Refuse to meet me, though she must have mourned me as dead after my shipwreck! Good God! is she out of her mind? What in Heaven's name is she doing on board this ship? Is it possible that she embarked with the view of searching for me? If so, why, now that I am found, does she refuse even to see me? But I know the law. I have a claim upon her. She is mine by the strictest legal title that mankind could invent for the protection of society, and if she will not receive me by gentle means, she shall meet me by force."

"No force will be permitted on board this ship, sir," said the doctor, sternly. "Your wife is under my own and the captain's protection, and I would urge you to regulate your conduct by the discipline which it is easily in our power to enforce."

As it turned out, only once did Mrs. Redway see her

husband whilst on board the *Great Britain*, and this was by accident. She left her cabin in the morning to pass to the bath-room. Mr. Redway was sitting at the table looking with a stupid inconsequential gaze at a globe containing gold and silver fish. Mrs. Redway, who had very good reason to believe her husband mad, was afraid of him. No man can hinder thought from visiting him; but he can arrest and strangle the impulse which thought engenders, and so rescue himself from action. But with the madman the thought is the impulse and the impulse the action. Which Mrs. Redway knew and feared. Her husband did not see her. She averted her face, gained the bath-room, bathed, and returned to her cabin.

Captain Hazard, on behalf of Mr. Redway, visited her in the cabin in which she lived as isolated as a hermit in solemn cell,

"Wearing out life's evening grey,"

and sought to influence her; but merely succeeded in hardening her obduracy. It was a question, she said, that was outside the limits of discussion, and she must flatly refuse even to consider it.

And so the unfortunate Mr. Redway wandered lonely about the deck and through the saloon, like a village idiot, with but one idea in his mind, which was a wrong one, much observed by the passengers, much discussed secretly, absolutely undisturbed by any suspicion that he was a subject of conversation, repeatedly asking how his wife did, remaining lost in wonder that she declined to meet him, and eluding, by a blank gaze, every effort of the doctor and the captain to elicit some information as to what had become of him after he had been received on board a French yacht from a washstand.

Mrs. Ramsay, on board the *Great Britain*, lived in retirement almost as strict as that observed by Mrs.

Redway. All her meals were served in her cabin. She received, however, a few visitors. One of these was Captain Hazard; another, the ship's doctor; a third, the lady whom Garcia had requested to deliver a message to Mrs. Ramsay after the vessel's arrival, and who behaved as a bosom friend and ardent sympathizer; and the fourth was the Chevalier Albert Garcia. The Chevalier's visits, indeed, to Mrs. Ramsay's private cabin were proportionally, considering the term spent on board ship, even more frequent than were his visits to Mrs. Redway when she was at the seaside, or whilst she resided in the neighbourhood of Colville Square. Will you, therefore, be vastly surprised to hear that before Garcia had completed his professional tour in Australia he married the widow of the late Jerningham Ramsay, of Bathurst, and the daughter of the late Mr. Doublejohn Loveday, of Tyburn Grange, Rose Bay, Sydney? And will the reader be very greatly surprised to hear that, down to his death, Mr. Redway was utterly at a loss to account for the reason why his wife declined to live with him, or to have anything to do with him?

THE END

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